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THE LETTERS OF PLINY THE YOUNGER

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THE LETTERS

OF

CAIUS PLINIUS CAECILIUS SECUNDUS

THE TRANSLATION OF MELMOTH

REVISED AND CORRECTED

WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND A SHORT MEMOIR

BY THE

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PREFACE.

This translation is based upon the well known one by William Melmoth, which has been for some time out of print. The alterations which have been made are in the direction of greater literalness in the text, whilst a few notes have been omitted and others introduced. The object throughout has been to adapt the book as much as possible to present requirements, without sacrificing any of the merit which Melmoth's translation is admitted to have possessed. My best acknowledgments are due to the Rev. A. Church and the Rev. W. J. Brodribb, also to Messrs. Longmans and Blackwood, for their kindness in permitting me to make use of the following works, viz. 'Select Letters of Pliny,' Church and Brodribb (Longmans), and 'Pliny's Letters,'* Church and Brodribb (Blackwood), which have been of great assistance.

F. C. T. B

* 'Ancient Classics for English Readers.'

INTRODUCTION.

Caius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, commonly known as the younger Pliny, one of the most elegant writers of his day, was born at Novum-Comum (Como) A.D. 62. Having lost his father, Lucius Caecilius, when quite a child, he was adopted by his uncle, Caius Plinius Secundus, the elder Pliny, author of the 'Natural History,' a man of sterling principle, extensive information, and almost incredible industry as a writer, judging from his nephew's account of him in a letter to his friend Baebius Macer. The younger Pliny seems to have been most carefully brought up; Verginius Rufus was his guardian, and he attended the oratorical classes of Quintilian and Nicetes Sacerdos. He began life as a pleader at the Roman bar, in his eighteenth year: it was in the same year that he lost his uncle, who perished in the eruption of Vesuvius, A.D. 79. A most graphic account of this eruption, also the manner of his uncle's death, and the escape of himself and his mother Plinia, is given in two letters to his friend Tacitus the historian. Two years later he was sent off on foreign service to the army in Syria, as military tribune. Here he met with the Stoic philosophers Artemidorus and Euphrates, whom he eulogizes in glowing terms in the Letters. Shortly after his return home, in the reign of Domitian, he obtained the quaestorship, and later on the praetorship. His temporary retirement from public life, towards the close of this reign,

appears to have given such offence to the emperor as nearly cost Pliny his life, indeed he actually was placed on the list of the proscribed, but the timely death of the tyrant saved him.

On the accession of Nerva to the throne, Pliny emerged from his retirement, and renewed his practice at the bar, where, in spite of weakness of health, he gained success, such as eventually brought him under the notice of the Emperor Trajan, of whom he became the personal friend, and under whom, after a series of promotions, he subsequently rose to the Consulship A.D. 100. On this occasion he delivered his Panegyric on Trajan, the only work of his that we possess beside the Letters, and a production worthy of the age in which it was composed and delivered. Pliny's next and last public office was the pro-praetorship of Pontica, to which he was appointed in A.D. 103; he remained in the province for not quite two years.

Of the rest of his life we know absolutely nothing, but may conjecture it to have been passed principally upon his estates, and among his books, which he was now able to enjoy at leisure. The date of his death is uncertain; it occurred, probably, early in the second century. He was twice married, and his second marriage appears to have been an unusually happy one, for his letters to Calpurnia are very tender and affectionate, and whenever he alludes to her in his correspondence with other friends, it is always in the highest terms. He had no children by either marriage.

It now remains to offer a few remarks upon the nature of this interesting collection of letters before us. In order to form a correct estimate of their literary merits we must consider the age in which they were written. In point of style they differ, of course, very materially from the letters of Cicero, their air of studied elegance contrasting markedly enough with Cicero's unaffected, almost careless, ease of

expression in those delightful letters to his different friends, written off, as it would seem, just on the spur of the moment, without effort, and without a thought as to what might afterwards become of them. But such a contrast is in no way surprising when we consider the essentially different social and political conditions of their respective periods. The age of Cicero and his contemporaries was necessarily one of reality and conflict. The convulsions, the party antagonisms, of the times made men grave and earnest, forced them to think seriously, to feel intensely, to act with promptitude and decision, to speak with energy and fire. Patriotism, ambition, sense of mutual co-operation, mutual antagonism, alike contributed to infuse a spirit of reality into public and social life. Hence the remarkable eloquence of that age. It could not help being an age of orators—Cicero, Caesar, Curio, Cato, Brutus, were men evoked by the circumstances of the times. Men in those days felt what they said or wrote, and whether speaking or writing under the influence of strong political feeling on the one hand or, on the other hand, under a sense of relief from the strain and tension of public business, would express themselves, in the former instance, with nerve, vigour, and directness; in the latter, readily, freely, genially, perfectly unaffectedly in either case. This accounts for the exquisite prose of Cicero, Caelius, and other contemporary writers, that blended ease, purity, and strength which marks at once the scholar and the public man; the prose of the golden age of Roman literature.

But with the establishment of the Empire an age of literary decay set in. Public spirit became extinct, eloquence ceased, and prose suffered, naturally, in proportion. The youth of the rising generation had nothing save the teaching of the rhetoricians lecturing from Greek and Roman models, bequeathed them by the generations preceding, to fall back upon, and a more or less artificial,

inflated mode of writing and recitation was the inevitable result. Such a teacher as Quintilian might set himself to the task of reforming the taste of the day, might lay down correct rules for composition, prune away redundancies, introduce simpler forms of expression, but he could not breathe new life into them; nothing less than a return to the old republican constitution and the old purity and simplicity of living could effect this, and this it was impossible to hope for. The education and social influences of the period, therefore, however well calculated to refine the taste and develop the critical faculty, were neither ennobling nor invigorating in tendency.

Now, regarded as literary compositions, Pliny's Letters reflect most faithfully the literary characteristics of their age—an age artificial, polished, critical, self-conscious, imitative—for, unlike his friend Tacitus, who represents no particular period, but would have taken up his own individual position in any age and in any country in which he might happen to have been born, Pliny, many degrees his inferior intellectually, is simply the literary product of his time. Upon the whole, this correspondence gives us the impression of a highly educated man, of active intelligence, refined tastes, and ample means, seeing a great deal of life, and moving in the best society, courteous, obliging, generous, sweet, affectionate, pure, sincere, sensitive, vain, and possibly (indeed probably, taking into account his delicate health) a little uncertain in temper in his different social relations, whilst skilful, energetic, industrious, and thoroughly conscientious, in the discharge of all his public duties. The tone of the letters of such a man is, as we might naturally gather from this, full of notes of contrast and variety, alternately playful, descriptive, kindly, tender, mournful, reflective, critical, rhetorical, ostentatious, and affected; the diction always elegant, though never entirely free from that artificial, self-conscious

mannerism only too characteristic of the prose of the silver age. In one letter we have a lively account of a successful day's sport in the country, in another he playfully rallies his friend Septitius Clarus on his remissness in not keeping to an engagement to supper; elsewhere the plan, arrangements, and surroundings of his Laurentine and Tuscan villas are described at length. There are constant letters to men holding public posts, recommending young friends of his to their especial notice; letters, again, to his wife Calpurnia, full of tender concern for her health and affectionate regret at not being able to be with her. In others he pathetically laments the deaths of friends—of Corellius and Verginius Rufus—the loss of whom no doubt he felt most sincerely, though the language slightly suggests the rhetorician now and then. One of the most genuinely pathetic letters of this class is that to his friend Marcellinus (Book IV. Letter XV.).

Occasionally the correspondence takes a moral and reflective turn; how we should bear with the faults and failings of others, the influence of literature upon the mind to soothe and strengthen, in times of domestic trouble, and topics kindred to these. Of his criticisms on contemporary poetry and oratory, some are really delicate and discriminating, others mere extravagant panegyric, whilst the occasional personal compliments to his friends are, as a rule, over-strained and exaggerated to the last degree. It is apparent from these letters what a liberal patron of literature and zealous promoter of education Pliny was; but he is too evidently conscious of his merits and anxiously desirous of their full recognition. Nothing, again, pleases him better than any little compliment paid him as a writer or speaker; yet Pliny's vanity is always more amusing than offensive, it is so *naïve* and unconcealed.

There is plenty of entertainment and information to be obtained from this correspondence, it gives us such an in-

sight into the nature of public and social life in those days. The most interesting amongst the sketches of various public men of the day, Pliny's friends and acquaintances, is that of the lawyer Regulus, a notorious informer and sycophant, a servile, unprincipled, grasping, pushing, audacious, eccentric fellow, yet industrious and even zealous in his profession. His abjectness, successful knavery, and eccentricity of behaviour upon different occasions, excite alternately the contempt, indignation, and amusement of Pliny, who seems to have found Regulus an interesting study altogether; and in a letter to Arrianus, alluding to his recent death, he speaks of it almost in the tone of 'I could have better spared a better man.' Amongst other anecdotes in the Letters is a remarkable story of a haunted house at Athens, also a curious account of a tame dolphin, which latter forms the subject of one of the most interesting letters in the whole collection.

The letters to Trajan are important as conveying an idea of the duties of a Roman provincial governor, and also as containing an account of the progress of Christianity in his particular province. The correspondence on the subject, between Trajan and Pliny, is quoted or referred to in every history of the Christian Church.

In brief then, judging from his letters, Pliny must have been an essentially good fellow, thoroughly popular amongst those with whom he mixed, and well deserving of their attachment, whilst his purity, integrity, and perfect freedom from all sordidness of motive, in spite of the prevalent impurity and corruption of the times, command our unfeigned admiration. All honour to him! with all his failings, he was a perfect gentleman and one of the best of men.'

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK I.

LETTER I. *To* Septitius.

You have frequently pressed me to make a select collection of my Letters (if there really be any deserving of a special preference) and give them to the public. I have selected them accordingly; not, indeed, in their proper order of time, for I was not compiling a history; but just as each came to hand. And now I have only to wish that you may have no reason to repent of your advice, nor I of my compliance: in that case, I may probably enquire after the rest, which at present lie neglected, and preserve those I shall hereafter write. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Arrianus.

I foresee your journey in my direction is likely to be delayed, and therefore send you the speech * which I promised in my former; requesting you, as usual, to revise and correct it. I desire this the more earnestly as I never, I think, wrote with the same *empressement* † in any of my former speeches; for I have endeavoured to imitate your old favourite Demosthenes, and Calvus,‡ who is

* Probably the speech Pliny delivered before the Centumviri or Court of the Hundred, in behalf of Attia Variola, a lady of quality. See book vi. letter xxxiii.

† In the original '*peraeque eodem ζήλῳ*,' 'with the same degree of *emulative ardour*.'

‡ An orator and poet of some distinction, born 82 B.C., died about 47 or 46 B.C. He was a remarkably small man, and is alluded to by Catullus as the '*Salaputium disertum*' 'the eloquent Tom Thumb.'

lately become mine, at least in the rhetorical forms of the speech; for, to catch their sublime *spirit*, is given, alone, to the 'inspired few.' * My subject, indeed, seemed naturally to lend itself to this (may I venture to call it?) emulation; consisting, as it did, almost entirely in a vehement style of address, even to a degree sufficient to have awakened me (if only I am capable of being awakened) out of that indolence in which I have long reposed. I have not however altogether neglected the flowers of rhetoric of my favourite Marc-Tully, wherever I could with propriety step out of my direct road, to enjoy a more flowery path: for it was energy, not austerity, at which I aimed. I would not have you imagine by this that I am bespeaking your indulgence: on the contrary, to make your correcting pen more vigorous, I will confess that neither my friends nor myself are averse from the publication of this piece, if only you should join in the approval of what is perhaps my folly. The truth is, as I must publish something, I wish it might be this performance rather than any other, because it is already finished: (you hear the wish of laziness.) At all events, however, something I must publish, and for many reasons; chiefly because the tracts which I have already sent into the world, though they have long since lost all their recommendation from novelty, are still, I am told, in request; if, after all, the booksellers are not tickling my ears. And let them; since, by that innocent deceit, I am encouraged to pursue my studies. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* Caninius Rufus.

How is that sweet Comum † of ours looking? What about that most enticing of villas, the portico where it is one perpetual spring, that shadiest of plane-tree walks, the crystal canal so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the lake ‡ lying below that so charm-

* A quotation from Virgil. Aen. vi. 129.

† The city where Pliny was born: now called Como, situated upon the Lake Larius, or Lago di Como. *M.*

‡ The Lake Larius, upon the banks of which this villa was situated. *M.*

ingly yields itself to the view? What have you to tell me of the firm yet soft *gestatio*,* the sunny bath-room, those dining-rooms for large parties, and the others for small ones, and all the elegant apartments for repose, both at noon † and night? Do these delightful attractions share you by turns, or do family affairs, as usual, frequently call you out from this agreeable retreat? If the scene of your enjoyments lies wholly there, you are one of the happiest of beings: if not, why then you are no better than the rest of them. Why not leave, my friend, (for it is quite time you did so) these insignificant, degrading, cares to others, and devote yourself, in this snug and secluded retreat, entirely to pleasures of the studious kind? Make these your business and your recreation, your labour and your rest, the subjects of your waking and even sleeping thoughts. Compose, bring out, something that shall always belong to you. All your other possessions will pass from one master to another: *this* alone, once yours, will remain yours for ever. I know the temper and genius I would seek to stimulate. Do but try and think as well of yourself as others will think of you, if you will only do yourself justice. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW,‡ POMPEIA CELERINA.

You might perceive by my last short letter, written some little while ago now, that I have no occasion of yours to inform me of the various conveniences you enjoy at your several villas. The elegant accommodations

* An avenue set apart for exercise either on horseback or in their vehicles; it was generally contiguous to their gardens, and laid out in the form of a circus. *M.*

† It was customary among the Romans to sleep in the middle of the day; and they had apartments for that purpose distinct from their bed-chambers. *M.*

‡ With respect to this lady, Lord Orrery observes, 'To form a just idea of Celerina herself, we need only remember that she had chosen Pliny for her son-in-law, and when he was so, knew how to entertain him.'

which are to be found at Narnia,* Ocriculum,† Carsola,‡ and at your favourite Perusia,§ particularly the pretty bath at Narnia, I am extremely well acquainted with. The fact is, I feel as though I had more of a property in what belongs to you than in my own possessions; and I know of no other difference between your house and my own than that I get more carefully and attentively looked after in the former than the latter. You may perhaps have occasion to make the same observation in your turn, whenever you should be coming in my direction; which I wish you *may* be doing, not only that you may partake of *mine* with the same ease and freedom that I do of *yours*, but to make those servants of mine bestir themselves a little, who are grown somewhat indifferent and careless in their attendance upon me. A long course under an easy master is apt to wear off the impressions of awe in servants; whereas new faces quicken their activities, as they generally exert themselves more diligently to please their master by attention to his guest than to himself. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Voconius Romanus.

Did you ever meet with a more abject and mean-spirited creature than Marcus Regulus since the death of Domitian, during whose reign his conduct was no less infamous, though more concealed, than under Nero's? He began to be afraid I was angry with him, and his apprehensions were perfectly correct; I *was* angry. He had not only done his best to increase the peril of the position in which Rusticus Arulenus‖ stood, but had exulted in his death; insomuch that he actually recited and published a libel upon his memory, in which he styles him 'The Stoics' Ape': adding, 'stigmated¶ with the

* Narni, a city in Ombria, in the district of Spoleto. *M.*

† Otricoli, in same district. *M.*

‡ Carsola, in same. *M.*

§ Perugia, in Tuscany. *M.*

‖ A pupil and intimate friend of Paetus Thrasea, the distinguished Stoic philosopher. Arulenus was put to death by Domitian for writing a panegyric upon Thrasea.

¶ The impropriety of this expression, in the original, seems to lie in the word *stigmosum*, which Regulus, probably either coined through

itellian scar.'* You recognize Regulus' eloquent strain! He fell with such fury upon the character of Herennius Senecio that Metius Carus said to him, one day, 'What business have you with my dead? Did I ever interfere in the affair of Crassus† or Camerinus‡?' Victims, you know, to Regulus, in Nero's time. For these reasons he imagined I was highly exasperated, and so at the recitation of his last piece, I got no invitation. Besides, he had not forgotten, it seems, with what deadly purpose he had once attacked me in the Court of the Hundred.§ Rusticus had desired me to act as counsel for Arionilla, Timon's wife: Regulus was engaged against me. In one part of the case I was strongly insisting upon a particular judgment given by Metius Modestus, an excellent man, at that time in banishment by Domitian's order. Now then for Regulus. 'Pray,' says he, 'what is your opinion of Modestus?' You see what a risk I should have run had I answered that I had a high opinion of him, how I should have disgraced myself on the other hand if I had replied that I had a bad opinion of him. But some guardian power, I am persuaded, must have stood by me to assist me in this emergency. 'I will tell you my opinion,' I said, 'if that is a matter to be brought before the court.' 'I ask you,' he repeated, 'what is your opinion of Modestus?' I replied that it was customary to examine witnesses to the character of an accused man, not to the character of one on whom sentence had aready been passed.

affectation or used through ignorance. It is a word, at least, which does not occur in any author of authority: the translator has endeavoured, therefore, to preserve the same sort of impropriety, by using an expression of like unwarranted stamp in his own tongue. *M.*

* An allusion to a wound he had received in the war between Vitellius and Vespasian.

† A brother of Piso Galba's adopted son. He was put to death by Nero.

‡ Sulpicius Camerinus, put to death by the same emperor, upon some frivolous charge.

§ A select body of men who formed a court of judicature, called the centumviral court.[1] Their jurisdiction extended chiefly, if not entirely, to questions of wills and intestate estates. Their number, it would seem, amounted to 105. *M.*

[1] The whole question, however, as to the origin, constitution, &c. of the centumviral court is very uncertain and conjectural.

He pressed me a third time. 'I do not now enquire, said he, 'your opinion of Modestus in general, I only ask your opinion of his loyalty.' 'Since you will have my opinion then,' I rejoined, 'I think it illegal even to ask a question concerning a person who stands convicted.' He sat down at this, completely silenced; and I received applause and congratulation on all sides, that without injuring my reputation by an advantageous, perhaps, though ungenerous answer, I had not entangled myself in the toils of so insidious a catch-question. Thoroughly frightened upon this then, he first seizes upon Caecilius Celer, next he goes and begs of Fabius Justus, that they would use their joint interest to bring about a reconciliation between us. And lest this should not be sufficient, he sets off to Spurinna* as well; to whom he came in the humblest way (for he is the most abject creature alive, where he has anything to be afraid of) and says to him, 'Do, I entreat of you, call on Pliny to-morrow morning, certainly in the morning, no later (for I cannot endure this anxiety of mind longer), and endeavour by any means in your power to soften his resentment.' I was already up, the next day, when a message arrived from Spurinna, 'I am coming to call on you.' I sent word back, 'Nay, I will wait upon *you*;' however, both of us setting out to pay this visit, we met under Livia's portico. He acquainted me with the commission he had received from Regulus, and interceded for him as became so worthy a man in behalf of one so totally dissimilar, without greatly pressing the thing. 'I will leave it to you,' was my reply, 'to consider what answer to return Regulus; you ought not to be deceived by me. I am waiting for Mauricus'† return' (for he had not yet come back out of exile), 'so that I cannot give you any definite answer either way, as I mean to be guided entirely by his decision, for he ought to be my leader here, and I simply to do as he says.' Well, a few days after this, Regulus met me as I was at the praetor's; he kept close to me there and begged a word in private, when he said he was afraid I deeply resented an expression he

* Vestricius Spurinna. See book iii. letter i.

† Junius Mauricus, the brother of Rusticus Arulenus. Both brothers were sentenced on the same day, Arulenus to execution and Mauricus to banishment.

had once made use of in his reply to Satrius and myself, before the Court of the Hundred, to this effect, 'Satrius Rufus, who *does not* endeavour to rival Cicero, and who *is* content with the eloquence of our own day.' I answered, now I perceived indeed, upon his own confession, that he had meant it ill-naturedly; otherwise it might have passed for a compliment. 'For I am free to own,' I said, 'that I *do* endeavour to rival Cicero, and am *not* content with the eloquence of our own day. For I consider it the very height of folly not to copy the best models of every kind. But, how happens it that you, who have so good a recollection of what passed upon this occasion, should have forgotten that other, when you asked me my opinion of the loyalty of Modestus?' Pale as he always is, he turned simply pallid at this, and stammered out, 'I did not intend to hurt *you* when I asked this question, but *Modestus*.' Observe the vindictive cruelty of the fellow, who made no concealment of his willingness to injure a banished man. But the reason he alleged in justification of his conduct is pleasant. Modestus, he explained, in a letter of his, which was read to Domitian, had used the following expression, 'Regulus, the biggest rascal that walks upon two feet:' and what Modestus had written was the simple truth, beyond all manner of controversy. Here, about, our conversation came to an end, for I did not wish to proceed further, being desirous to keep matters open until Mauricus returns. It is no easy matter, I am well aware of that, to destroy Regulus; he is rich, and at the head of a party; courted * by many, feared by more: a passion that will

* There seems to have been a cast of uncommon blackness in the character of this Regulus; otherwise the benevolent Pliny would scarcely have singled him out, as he has in this and some following letters, for the subject of his warmest contempt and indignation. Yet, infamous as he was, he had his flatterers and admirers; and a contemporary poet frequently represents him as one of the most finished characters of the age, both in eloquence and virtue; particularly in the following epigram, occasioned by his escape from an imminent danger.

'Where leads the way to Tibur's stately towers,
And snow-white Albula sulphureous pours,
A villa stands, from Rome a little space;
And every muse delights to haunt the place.
Here once a *Portic* lent her cooling shade;
Alas! how near to impious guilt betrayed! [Sudden

sometimes prevail even beyond friendship itself. But, after all, ties of this sort are not so strong but they may be loosened; for a bad man's credit is as shifty as himself. However (to repeat), I am waiting until Mauricus comes back. He is a man of sound judgment and great sagacity, formed upon long experience, and who, from his observations of the past, well knows how to judge of the future. I shall talk the matter over with him, and consider myself justified either in pursuing or dropping this affair, as he shall advise. Meanwhile I thought I owed this account to our mutual friendship, which gives you an undoubted right to know about not only all my actions but all my plans as well. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* Cornelius Tacitus.

You will laugh (and you are quite welcome) when I tell you that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has taken three noble boars. 'What!' you exclaim, 'Pliny!'—*Even he.* However, I indulged at the same time my beloved inactivity; and, whilst I sat at my nets,* you would have found me, not with boar-spear or javelin, but pencil and tablet,† by my side. I mused and wrote, being determined to return, if with my hands empty, at least with my memorandums full. Believe me, this way of

> Sudden it fell; what time the steeds convey
> Safe from her nodding walls great Regulus away.
> To crush that head, not even Fortune dared,
> And the world's general indignation feared.
> Blest be the ruin, be the danger blest!
> The *standing* pile had ne'er the gods confest.'
>
> Mart. lib. i. ep. 13.

But poets, especially needy ones, such as we know Martial was, are not generally the most faithful painters in this way; and of the two copies of Regulus now before us, there can be no doubt which most resembled the original. *M.*

* 'The sages of antiquity were rather poachers than sportsmen.' Orrery.

† I.e. *stylus* and *tablets.* The *stylus* was an iron instrument about the size and shape of a pencil, and used for writing upon waxen tablets (*pugillares*).

studying is not to be despised: it is wonderful how the mind is stirred and quickened into activity by brisk bodily exercise. There is something, too, in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that profound silence which is observed on these occasions, that forcibly disposes the mind to meditation. So for the future, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take your tablets along with you, as well as your basket and bottle: for be assured you will find Minerva no less fond of traversing the hills than Diana. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* OCTAVIUS RUFUS.

See to what a proud eminence you have raised me! You have invested me with a power and dominion equal to that which Homer attributes to the supreme Jove.

> 'From heaven's imperial throne Jove heard his prayer,
> Part he admits, and scatters part in air.' *

'Tis thus with a nod or frown I may grant or reject your petition as I see proper. To be serious: as I am at liberty, I think, to excuse myself to the Baetici,† especially at your request, from engaging myself as their counsel against a particular person; so, on the other hand, to oppose a province which I have long since attached to me by so many kindnesses, as well as exertions and even risks incurred on their behalf, would be acting inconsistently with my honour, and that uniformity of conduct which I know you admire. I intend steering a middle course then in this affair, and of the two alternatives which you propose to me, choose that which will satisfy your judgment, as well as your inclination. For I do not look upon myself as obliged to consider so much what you at present desire as what such a man as yourself will *always* approve. I hope to be at Rome about the 15th of October, when I shall confirm to Gallus in person what I have here

* Iliad, xvi. *v.* 250.

† The people of Baetica, a part of Spain, comprehending Andalusia and Granada. *M.*

promised: for the performance of which I shall engage your word as well as my own. Meanwhile you may assure him of my friendly feeling towards him.

. . . . 'the fire of men and gods,
With gracious aspect mild, compliance nods.'*

For why should I not continue to quote verses out of Homer, since you will not let me quote yours? which I feel such a passionate longing for, that I question whether I could withstand such a bribe, even to plead against the Baetici. I had almost forgotten to mention, the very last thing I should forget, that I have received those capital dates you sent me. They are likely to prove formidable rivals to my favourite figs and mushrooms. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Pompeius Saturninus.

Nothing could be more seasonable than the letter which I received from you, in which you so earnestly beg me to send you some of my literary efforts: the very thing I was intending to do. So you have only put spurs into a willing horse and at once saved yourself the excuse of refusing the trouble, and me the awkwardness of asking the favour. Without hesitation then I avail myself of your offer; as you must now take the consequence of it without reluctance. But you are not to expect anything new from a lazy fellow, for I am going to ask you to revise again the speech I made to my fellow-townsmen when I dedicated the public library to their use. You have already, I remember, obliged me with some annotations upon this piece, but only in a general way; and so I now beg of you not only to take a general view of the whole speech, but, as you usually do, to go over it in detail. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty to publish or suppress it: and the delay in the meantime will be attended with one of these alternatives; for, while we are deliberating whether it is fit for publishing, a frequent revision will either make it so, or convince me that it is not. Though indeed my principal difficulty respecting

* Iliad, i. *v.* 518.

the publication of this harangue arises not so much from the composition as out of the subject itself, which has something in it, I am afraid, that will look too like ostentation and self-conceit. For, be the style ever so plain and unassuming, yet, as the occasion necessarily led me to speak not only of the munificence of my ancestors, but of my own as well, my modesty will be seriously embarrassed. A dangerous and slippery situation this, even when one is led into it by plea of necessity! For, if mankind are not very favourable to panegyric, even when bestowed upon others, how much more difficult is it to reconcile them to it when it is a tribute which we pay to ourselves or to our ancestors? Virtue, by herself, is generally the object of envy, but particularly so when glory and distinction attend her; and the world is never so little disposed to detract from the rectitude of your conduct as when it passes unobserved and unapplauded. For these reasons, I frequently ask myself whether I composed this harangue, such as it is, merely from a personal consideration, or with a view to the public as well; and I am sensible that what may be exceedingly useful and proper in the prosecution of any affair may lose all its grace and fitness the moment the business is completed: for instance, in the case before us, what could be more to my purpose than to explain at large the motives of my intended bounty? For, first, it engaged my mind in good and ennobling thoughts; next, it enabled me, by frequent dwelling upon them, to receive a perfect impression of their loveliness, while it guarded at the same time against that repentance which is sure to follow on an impulsive act of generosity. There arose also a further advantage from this method, as it fixed in me a certain habitual contempt of money. For, while mankind seem to be universally governed by an innate passion to accumulate wealth, the cultivation of a more generous affection in my own breast taught me to emancipate myself from the slavery of so predominant a principle: and I thought that my honest intentions would be the more meritorious as they should appear to proceed, not from sudden impulse, but from the dictates of cool and deliberate reflection. I considered, besides, that I was not engaging myself to exhibit public games or gladiatorial

combats, but to establish an annual fund for the support and education of young men of good families but scanty means. The pleasures of the senses are so far from wanting the oratorical arts to recommend them that we stand in need of all the powers of eloquence to moderate and restrain rather than stir up their influence. But the work of getting anybody to cheerfully undertake the monotony and drudgery of education must be effected not by pay merely, but by a skilfully worked-up appeal to the emotions as well. If physicians find it expedient to use the most insinuating address in recommending to their patients a wholesome though, perhaps, unpleasant regimen, how much more occasion had *he* to exert all the powers of persuasion who, out of regard to the public welfare, was endeavouring to reconcile it to a most useful though not equally popular benefaction? Particularly, as my aim was to recommend an institution, calculated solely for the benefit of those who were parents to men who, at present, had no children; and to persuade the greater number to wait patiently until they should be entitled to an honour of which a *few* only could immediately partake. But as at that time, when I attempted to explain and enforce the general design and benefit of my institution, I considered more the general good of my countrymen, than any reputation which might result to myself; so I am apprehensive lest, if I publish that piece, it may perhaps look as if I had a view rather to my own personal credit than the benefit of others. Besides, I am very sensible how much nobler it is to place the reward of virtue in the silent approbation of one's own breast than in the applause of the world. Glory ought to be the consequence, not the motive, of our actions; and although it happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet it is by no means the less fair for having missed the applause it deserved. But the world is apt to suspect that those who celebrate their own beneficent acts performed them for no other motive than to have the pleasure of extolling them. Thus, the splendour of an action which would have been deemed illustrious if related by another is totally extinguished when it becomes the subject of one's own applause. Such is the disposition of mankind, if they cannot blast the action, they will

censure its display; and whether you do what does not deserve particular notice, or set forth yourself what does, either way you incur reproach. In my own case there is a peculiar circumstance that weighs much with me: this speech was delivered not before the people, but the Decurii;* not in the forum, but the senate; I am afraid therefore it will look inconsistent that I, who, when I delivered it, seemed to avoid popular applause, should now, by publishing this performance, appear to court it: that I, who was so scrupulous as not to admit even those persons to be present when I delivered this speech, who were interested in my benefaction, lest it might be suspected I was actuated in this affair by any ambitious views, should now seem to solicit admiration, by forwardly displaying it to such as have no other concern in my munificence than the benefit of example. These are the scruples which have occasioned my delay in giving this piece to the public; but I submit them entirely to your judgment, which I shall ever esteem as a sufficient sanction of my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* MINUTIUS FUNDANUS.

When one considers how the time passes at Rome, one cannot be surprised that, take any single day, and it either is, or at least seems to be, spent reasonably enough; and yet, upon casting up the whole sum, the amount will appear quite otherwise. Ask anyone, 'What have you been doing to-day?' He will tell you perhaps, 'I have been at the ceremony of putting on the *toga virilis*;† I attended a wedding; one man begged me to be witness to his will; another to attend the hearing of his case; a third called me in to a consultation.' These things seem important enough whilst one is about them; yet, when you reflect at your leisure that every day has been thus employed, they seem mere trifles. At such a time one

* The Decurii were a sort of senators in the municipal or corporate cities of Italy. *M.*

† The Roman youths at the age of seventeen changed their attire, and took up the *toga virilis*, or manly gown: upon which occasion they were conducted by the friends of the family with great ceremony either into the forum or capitol, and there invested with this new robe. *M.*

is apt to think to oneself, 'How much of my life I have frittered away in dull, useless, routine sort of work.' At least it is a reflection which frequently comes across me at Laurentum,* after I have been doing a little reading and writing, and taking care of the animal machine; (for the body must be supported if we would keep the mind alert and vigorous.) There I neither hear nor speak anything I have occasion to be sorry for. No one talks scandal to me, and I find fault with nobody, unless myself, when I am dissatisfied with my compositions. There I live undisturbed by rumour, and free from the anxious solicitudes of hope and fear, conversing only with myself and my books. True and genuine life! Sweet and honourable repose! More, perhaps, to be desired than employments of any kind! Thou solemn sea and solitary shore, true and most retired school of art and poetry, with how many noble thoughts do you inspire me! Snatch then, my friend, as I have, the first opportunity of leaving the town with its din, its empty bustle, and laborious trifles, and devote your days to study or to repose; for, as my friend Attilius happily observed, 'It is better to have nothing to do than to be doing nothing.' Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Atrius Clemens.

If ever polite literature flourished at Rome, it certainly flourishes now; and I could give you many eminent instances: I will content myself, however, with naming only Euphrates,† the philosopher. I first became acquainted with this excellent person in my youth, when I served in the army in Syria. I had an opportunity of conversing with him familiarly, and took some pains to

* 'Laurentum was about sixteen miles from Rome, and though apparently not so beautiful or fashionable a place as Baiae, it still had powerful attractions for the wealthy Roman nobles. It chiefly consisted at this time of the villas of such men, and thus resembled some of the more distant suburbs of London.' (Church and Brodribb.)

† 'Euphrates was a native of Tyre, or, according to others, of Byzantium. He belonged to the Stoic school of philosophy. In his old age he became tired of life, and asked and obtained from Hadrian permission to put an end to himself by poison.' Smith's Dict. of Greek and Roman Biog.

gain his affection: though that, indeed, was not very difficult, for he is easy of access, unreserved, and actuated by those social principles he professes to teach. I should think myself extremely happy if I had as fully answered the expectations he, at that time, conceived of me, as he exceeds everything I had imagined of him. But, perhaps, I admire his excellencies more now than I did then, because I know better how to appreciate them; not that I sufficiently appreciate them even now. For as none but those who are skilled in painting, statuary, or the plastic art, can form a right judgment of any performance in those respective modes of representation, so a man must, himself, have made great advances in philosophy before he is capable of forming a just opinion of a philosopher. However, as far as I am qualified to determine, Euphrates is possessed of so many shining talents that he cannot fail to attract and impress the most ordinarily educated observer. He reasons with much force, acuteness, and elegance; and frequently rises into all the sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style is varied and flowing, and at the same time so wonderfully captivating that he forces the reluctant attention of the most unwilling hearer. For the rest, a fine stature, a comely aspect, long hair, and a large silver beard: circumstances which, though they may probably be thought trifling and accidental, contribute, however, to gain him much reverence. There is no affected negligence in his dress and appearance; his countenance is grave but not austere; and his approach commands respect without creating awe. Distinguished as he is by the perfect blamelessness of his life, he is no less so by the courtesy and engaging sweetness of his manner. He attacks vices, not persons, and, without severity, reclaims the wanderer from the paths of virtue. You follow his exhortations with rapt attention, hanging, as it were, upon his lips; and even after the heart is convinced, the ear still wishes to listen to the harmonious reasoner. His family consists of three children (two of which are sons), whom he educates with the utmost care. His father-in-law, Pompeius Julianus, as he greatly distinguished himself in every other part of his life, so particularly in this, that though he was himself of the highest rank in his province, yet, among many considerable

matches, he preferred Euphrates for his son-in-law, as first in merit, though not in dignity. But why do I dwell any longer upon the virtues of a man whose conversation I am so unfortunate as not to have time sufficiently to enjoy? Is it to increase my regret and vexation that I cannot enjoy it? My time is wholly taken up in the execution of a very honourable, indeed, but equally troublesome, employment; in hearing cases, signing petitions, making up accounts, and writing a vast amount of the most illiterate literature. I sometimes complain to Euphrates (for I have leisure at least to *complain*) of these unpleasing occupations. He endeavours to console me, by affirming that, to be engaged in the public service, to hear and determine cases, to explain the laws, and administer justice, is a part, and the noblest part, too, of philosophy; as it is reducing to practice what her professors teach in speculation. But even *his* rhetoric will never be able to convince me that it is better to be at this sort of work than to spend whole days in attending his lectures and learning his precepts. I cannot therefore but strongly recommend it to you, who have the time for it, when next you come to town (and you will come, I daresay, so much the sooner for this), to take the benefit of his elegant and refined instructions. For I do not (as many do) envy others the happiness I cannot share with them myself: on the contrary, it is a very sensible pleasure to me when I find my friends in possession of an enjoyment from which I have the misfortune to be excluded. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* Fabius Justus.

It is a long time since I have had a letter from you. 'There is nothing to write about,' you say: well then write and let me know just this, that 'there is nothing to write about,' or tell me in the good old style, *If you are well, that's right, I am quite well.* This will do for me, for it implies everything. You think I am joking? Let me assure you I am in sober earnest. Do let me know how you are; for I cannot remain ignorant any longer without growing exceedingly anxious about you. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* CALESTRIUS TIRO.

I have suffered the heaviest loss; if that word be sufficiently strong to express the misfortune which has deprived me of so excellent a man. Corellius Rufus is dead; and dead, too, by his own act! A circumstance of great aggravation to my affliction; as that sort of death which we cannot impute either to the course of nature, or the hand of Providence, is, of all others, the most to be lamented: It affords some consolation in the loss of those friends whom disease snatches from us that they fall by the general destiny of mankind; but those who destroy themselves leave us under the inconsolable reflection, that they had it in their power to have lived longer. It is true, Corellius had many inducements to be fond of life; a blameless conscience, high reputation, and great dignity of character, besides a daughter, a wife, a grandson, and sisters; and, amidst these numerous pledges of happiness, faithful friends. Still, it must be owned he had the highest motive (which to a wise man will always have the force of destiny), urging him to this resolution. He had long been tortured by so tedious and painful a complaint that even these inducements to living on, considerable as they are, were over-balanced by the reasons on the other side. In his thirty-third year (as I have frequently heard him say) he was seized with the gout in his feet. This was hereditary; for diseases, as well as possessions, are sometimes handed down by a sort of inheritance. A life of sobriety and continence had enabled him to conquer and keep down the disease while he was still young, latterly as it grew upon him with advancing years, he had to manfully bear it, suffering meanwhile the most incredible and undeserved agonies; for the gout was now not only in his feet, but had spread itself over his whole body. I remember, in Domitian's reign, paying him a visit at his villa, near Rome. As soon as I entered his chamber, his servants went out: for it was his rule, never to allow them to be in the room when any intimate friend was with him; nay, even his own wife, though she could have kept any secret, used to go too. Casting his eyes round the room, 'Why,' he exclaimed, 'do you suppose I endure

life so long under these cruel agonies? It is with the hope that I may outlive, at least for one day, that villain.' * Had his bodily strength been equal to his resolution, he would have carried his desire into practical effect. God heard and answered his prayer; and when he felt that he should now die a free, un-enslaved, Roman, he broke through those other great, but now less forcible, attachments to the world. His malady increased; and, as it now grew too violent to admit of any relief from temperance, he resolutely determined to put an end to its uninterrupted attacks, by an effort of heroism. He had refused all sustenance during four days, when his wife Hispulla sent our common friend Geminius to me, with the melancholy news, that Corellius was resolved to die; and that neither her own entreaties nor her daughter's could move him from his purpose; I was the only person left who could reconcile him to life. I ran to his house with the utmost precipitation. As I approached it, I met a second messenger from Hispulla, Julius Atticus, who informed me there was nothing to be hoped for now, even from me, as he seemed more hardened than ever in his purpose. He had said, indeed to his physician, who pressed him to take some nourishment, ''Tis resolved'; an expression which, as it raised my admiration of the greatness of his soul, so it does my grief for the loss of him. I keep thinking what a friend, what a man, I am deprived of. That he had reached his sixty-seventh year, an age which even the strongest seldom exceed, I well know; that he is released from a life of continual pain; that he has left his dearest friends behind him, and (what was dearer to him than all these) the state in a prosperous condition: all this I know. Still I cannot forbear to lament him, as if he had been in the prime and vigour of his days; and I lament him (shall I own my weakness?) on my own account. And—to confess to you as I did to Calvisius, in the first transport of my grief—I sadly fear, now that I am no longer under his eye, I shall not keep so strict a guard over my conduct. Speak comfort to me then, not that *he was old, he was infirm:* all this I know; but by supplying me with some reflections that are now

* Domitian.

and resistless, which I have never heard, never read, anywhere else. For all that I have heard, and all that I have read, occur to me of themselves; but all these are by far too weak to support me under so severe an affliction. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* SOCIUS SENECIO.

This year has produced a plentiful crop of poets: during the whole month of April scarcely a day has passed on which we have not been entertained with the recital of some poem. It is a pleasure to me to find that a taste for polite literature still exists, and that men of genius *do* come forward and make themselves known, notwithstanding the lazy attendance they get for their pains. The greater part of the audience sit in the lounging-places, gossip away their time there, and are perpetually sending to enquire whether the author has made his entrance yet, whether he has got through the preface, or whether he has almost finished the piece. Then at length they saunter in with an air of the greatest indifference, nor do they condescend to stay through the recital, but go out before it is over, some slyly and stealthily, others again with perfect freedom and unconcern. And yet our fathers can remember how Claudius Caesar walking one day in the palace, and hearing a great shouting, enquired the cause; and being informed that Nonianus* was reciting a composition of his, went immediately to the place, and agreeably surprised the author with his presence. But now, were one to bespeak the attendance of the idlest man living, and remind him of the appointment ever so often, or ever so long beforehand; either he would not come at all, or if he did would grumble about having 'lost a day!' for no other reason but because he had *not* lost it. So much the more do *those* authors deserve our encouragement and applause who have resolution to persevere in their studies, and to read out their compositions in spite of this apathy or arrogance on the part of their audience. Myself indeed, I scarcely ever miss being present upon any occasion; though, to

* A pleader and historian of some distinction, mentioned by Tacitus, Ann. xiv. 19, and by Quintilian. x. 1. 102.

tell the truth, the authors have generally been friends of mine, as indeed there are few men of literary tastes who are not. It is this which has kept me in town longer than I had intended. I am now, however, at liberty to go back into the country, and write something myself; which I do not intend reciting, lest I should seem rather to have *lent* than given my attendance to these recitations of my friends, for in these, as in all other good offices, the obligation ceases the moment you seem to expect a return. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* Junius Mauricus.

You desire me to look out a proper husband for your niece: it is with justice you enjoin me that office. You know the high esteem and affection I bore that great man her father, and with what noble instructions he nurtured my youth, and taught me to deserve those praises he was pleased to bestow upon me. You could not give me, then, a more important, or more agreeable, commission; nor could I be employed in an office of higher honour, than that of choosing a young man worthy of being father of the grandchildren of Rusticus Arulenus; a choice I should be long in determining, were I not acquainted with Minutius Aemilianus, who seems formed for our purpose. He loves me with all that warmth of affection which is usual between young men of equal years (as indeed I have the advance of him but by a very few), and reveres me at the same time, with all the deference due to age; and, in a word, he is no less desirous to model himself by my instructions than I was by those of yourself and your brother. He is a native of Brixia,* one of those provinces in Italy which still retain much of the old modesty, frugal simplicity, and even rusticity, of manner. He is the son of Minutius Macrinus, whose humble desires were satisfied with standing at the head of the equestrian order†: for though he was nominated by Vespasian in the number of those whom that prince dignified with the praetorian office, yet, with an inflexible greatness of mind, he resolutely preferred an honourable repose, to the ambitious, shall I

* A town in Venice, now called Brescia. *M.*

† See letter xix, note †.

call them, or exalted, pursuits, in which we public men are engaged. His grandmother, on the mother's side, is Serrana Procula, of Patavium:* you are no stranger to the character of its citizens; yet Serrana is looked upon, even among these correct people, as an exemplary instance of strict virtue. Acilius, his uncle, is a man of almost exceptional gravity, wisdom, and integrity. In short, you will find nothing throughout his family unworthy of yours. Minutius himself has plenty of vivacity, as well as application, together with a most amiable and becoming modesty. He has already, with considerable credit, passed through the offices of quaestor, tribune, and praetor; so that you will be spared the trouble of soliciting for him those honourable employments. He has a fine, well-bred, countenance, with a ruddy, healthy complexion, while his whole person is elegant and comely and his mien graceful and senatorian: advantages, I think, by no means to be slighted, and which I consider as the proper tribute to virgin innocence. I think I *may* add that his father is very rich. When I contemplate the character of those who require a husband of my choosing, I know it is unnecessary to mention wealth; but when I reflect upon the prevailing manners of the age, and even the laws of Rome, which rank a man according to his possessions, it certainly claims *some* regard; and, indeed, in establishments of this nature, where children and many other circumstances are to be duly weighed, it is an article that well deserves to be taken into the account. You will be inclined, perhaps, to suspect that affection has had too great a share in the character I have been drawing, and that I have heightened it beyond the truth: but I will stake all my credit, you will find everything far beyond what I have represented. I love the young fellow indeed (as he justly deserves) with all the warmth of a most ardent affection; but for that very reason I would not ascribe more to his merit than I know it will bear. Farewell.

* An ancient town in the north of Italy, said to have been founded by a Trojan colony. Livy was born here. It was entirely destroyed by Agilolf, king of the Lombards, towards the close of the sixth century A.D., but was afterwards rebuilt. The modern town (Padua) is one of the most flourishing cities in Northern Italy. It has 53,000 inhabitants, possesses a good university, and a thriving trade.

LETTER XV. *To* Septitius Clarus.

Ah! you are a pretty fellow! You make an engagement to come to supper and then never appear. Justice shall be exacted;—you shall reimburse me to the very last penny the expense I went to on your account; no small sum, let me tell you. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce a-piece, three snails,* two eggs, and a barley cake, with some sweet wine and snow,† (the snow most certainly I shall charge to your account, as a rarity that will not keep.) Olives, beet-root, gourds, onions, and a thousand other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, whichever you preferred; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the oysters,‡ sows'-bellies, sea-urchins, and dancers from

* The English reader may probably be surprised to find this article in Pliny's philosophical bill of fare; it will not be improper, therefore, to inform him that a dish of snails was very common at a Roman table. The manner used to fatten them is related by some very grave authors of antiquity; and Pliny the elder mentions one Fulvius Hirpinus, who had studied that art with so much success that the shells of some of his snails would contain about ten quarts. (H. N. i. 9, 56.) In some parts of Switzerland this food is still in high repute. See Addison's Trav. p. 364. *M.*

† The Romans used snow not only to cool their liquors but their stomachs too, after having inflamed themselves with high eating. '*Nivem rodunt*,' says Seneca, '*solatium stomachi aestuantis.*' (Ep. 95.) This custom still prevails in Italy, especially at Naples, where (as Mr. Addison observes) they 'drink very few liquors, not so much as water, that have not lain in *fresco*, and everybody, from the highest to the lowest, makes use of it; insomuch that a scarcity of snow would raise a mutiny at Naples, as much as a dearth of corn or provisions in another country.' Trav. 185. *M.*

‡ Our own country had the honour of furnishing Rome with oysters, which were fetched from Sandwich: Montanus, mentioned by Juvenal, was so well skilled in the science of good eating, that he could tell, by the first taste, whether they came from that coast:

. . . . '*Circaeis nata forent, an*
Lucrinum ad saxum, Rutupinove edita fundo
Ostrea, callebat primo deprehendere morsu.'
Sat. iv. 140. *M*

TRANSLATION.

. . . . 'He could tell,
At the first relish, if his oysters fed
On the *Rutupian*, or the Lucrine bed.' (Gifford.)

Cadiz of a certain —— I know not who, were, it seems, more to your taste. You shall give satisfaction, how, shall at present be a secret. Oh! you have behaved cruelly, grudging your friend,—I had almost said yourself; —and upon second thoughts I do say so;—in this way: for how agreeably should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and literary amusements! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but nowhere with more unconstrained mirth, simplicity, and freedom: only make the experiment, and if you do not ever after excuse yourself to your other friends, to come to me, always put me off to go to them. Farewell

LETTER XVI. *To* ERUCIUS.

I conceived an affection for Pompeius Saturninus, my friend, I mean, of that name, and admired his genius, even long before I knew how versatile, how flexible, how many-sided a genius it was: but he has now taken full and unreserved possession of me. I have heard him, whether he spoke from preparation or extempore, plead with no less warmth and energy than elegance and finish. He abounds in just and pointed reflections, his periods are graceful and majestic, his words impressive and sterling. These united excellencies give you infinite delight, not only when you are carried along, if I may so say, with the resistless current of his fiery eloquence, but also when merely read by themselves. You will be of my opinion when you take up any of his speeches to read, and will not hesitate to place him in the same rank with the ancients, whom he so happily emulates. But you will view him with increased pleasure in his character of historian, taking into account the conciseness, lucidity, elegance, brilliancy, and sublimity of his style of narration; and the same strength of expression, though more compressed, condensed, and restricted, runs through his historical harangues which so eminently characterises his pleadings. In addition to all this, he has composed several poetical pieces in the manner of Calvus and

Catullus. What strokes of wit, what sweetness of numbers, what pointed satire, what tenderness, appear in his verses! He introduces indeed, but designedly, occasional harsher metres amidst easy, graceful, harmonius ones, in the manner too of Calvus or Catullus. He read to me, the other day, some letters which he assured me were written by his wife: I fancied I was hearing Plautus or Terence in prose. Whether they are that lady's (as he positively affirms), or his own, which he absolutely denies, he deserves equal praise; either for writing such pieces himself, or for having so highly improved and refined the genius of his wife, whom he married young and uninstructed. His works are ever in my hands; and I never sit down to compose anything of my own, or to revise what I have already written, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, that I do not take up this agreeable author; and as often as I do so, he is still new. Let me strongly recommend him to the same degree of intimacy with you; nor let it be any objection to his works that he is a contemporary writer. Had he flourished in some former age, not only his publications, but pictures and statues of him would have been passionately enquired after: shall then the honour and pleasure he confers upon us by his presence in our midst pall upon one, so to speak, through satiety? It argues, surely, a very perverse and envious disposition, not to admire a man who so thoroughly deserves admiration, just because we have it in our power to see, address, listen to, embrace, and give him not only our applause, but our friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* Cornelius Titianus.

The social virtues have not yet quite forsaken the world; and there are still those whose generous esteem extends itself even to their departed friends. Titianus Capito has obtained the emperor's permission to erect a statue in the forum to the late L. Syllanus. It is a truly laudable and noble application of princely favour, to employ it to such a purpose as this, and to exert one's

interest for the glory of others. To preserve the memory of eminent characters, is, indeed, habitual to Capito: he has placed in his house (where he may safely take that liberty) the statues of the Bruti, the Cassii, and the Catos,* which he not only contemplates with ardent veneration, but has also celebrated the lives of those great patriots in some excellent verses. One may be very sure a man possesses great virtue himself who has such a love for it in others. Syllanus certainly deserves the honour done him, and Capito has by this act secured to himself that immortality which he has conferred on his friend; for he who erects a statue in the Roman forum to a worthy character receives as much honour as he confers. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS.†

You tell me in your letter that you are extremely alarmed by a dream; apprehending that it forebodes some ill success to you in the case you have undertaken to defend; and, therefore, desire that I would get it adjourned for a few days, or, at least, to the next. This will be no easy matter, but I will try:

. . . . 'For dreams descend from Jove.'‡

Meanwhile, it is very material for you to recollect whether your dreams § generally represent things as they after-

* Suetonius informs us that Caligula destroyed the statues of those illustrious persons, which Augustus had erected in the capitol; and published an edict whereby he prohibited statues to be raised to any person in his lifetime, unless by the emperor's express permission. It is probable Pliny here alludes to a decree of this nature made by some succeeding emperor, perhaps Domitian, against publicly erecting statues to these glorious assertors of liberty. *M.*

† The historian.

‡ Iliad, i. 63.

§ Dreams were considered, from the earliest antiquity, as sacred admonitions and hints of futurity. Many of the heathen oracles were delivered in this manner; and, even among the Jews, we find several intimations conveyed to their prophets in the same way. The Romans,

wards fall out, or quite the reverse. But if I may judge of yours by one that happened to myself, this dream that alarms you so seems to portend that you will acquit yourself with great success. I had promised to stand counsel for Junius Pastor; when I fancied in my sleep that my mother-in-law came to me, and, throwing herself at my feet, earnestly entreated me not to plead. I was at that time a very young man; the case was to be argued in the four centumviral courts: my adversaries were some of the most important personages in Rome, and particular favourites of Caesar; * any of which circumstances were sufficient, after such an inauspicious dream, to have discouraged me. Notwithstanding this, I engaged in the cause, reflecting that,

> 'Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,
> And asks no omen but his country's cause.' †

for I looked upon the promise I had given to be as sacred to me as my country, or, if that were possible, more so. The event happened as I wished; and it was that very case which first procured me the favourable attention of the public, and threw open to me the gates of Fame. Consider then whether your dream, like this one I have related, may not pre-signify success. But, after all, perhaps you will think it safer to pursue this cautious maxim: 'Never do a thing concerning the rectitude of which you are in doubt:' if so, write me word. In the interval, I will consider of some excuse, and will so plead your cause that you may be able to plead it yourself any day you like best. In this respect, you are in a better situation than I was: the court of the centumviri, where

in general, were great observers of dreams; and Augustus Caesar is said to have escaped a very imminent danger at the battle of Philippi, by quitting his tent in compliance with a dream of Antonius, his physician. (Val. Max. l. i. c. 7.) This is mentioned to obviate any prejudice against Pliny, which might possibly arise in the mind of a reader unacquainted with the prevailing sentiments of the ancients upon this point, who might otherwise be surprised to find our author talking seriously upon a subject of this nature. *M.*

* Domitian.

† Iliad, xii. 243. Pope.

I was to plead, admits of no adjournment: whereas, in that where your case is to be heard, though no easy matter to procure one, still, however, it is possible. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* ROMANUS FIRMUS.

As you are my towns-man, my school-fellow, and the earliest companion of my youth; as there was the strictest friendship between my mother and uncle and your father (a happiness which I also enjoyed as far as the great inequality of our ages would admit); can I fail (thus biassed as I am by so many and weighty considerations) to contribute all in my power to the advancement of your honours? The rank you bear in our province, as decurio, is a proof that you are possessed, at least, of an hundred thousand sesterces; * but that we may also have the satisfaction of seeing you a Roman knight,† I present you with three hundred thousand, in order to make up the sum requisite to entitle you to that dignity. The long acquaintance we have had leaves me no room to apprehend you will ever be forgetful of this instance of my friendship. And I know your disposition too well to think it necessary to advise you to enjoy this honour with the modesty that becomes a person who received it from me: for the advanced rank we possess through a friend's kindness is a sort of sacred trust, in which we have *his* judgment, as well as our *own character*, to maintain, and therefore to be guarded with the greater caution. Farewell.

* Equal to about £780 of our money. After the reign of Augustus the value of the *sestertius* = 1*d.* 3·5 farthings.

† 'The equestrian dignity, or that order of the Roman people which we commonly call *knights*, had nothing in it analogous to any order of modern knighthood, but depended entirely upon a valuation of their estates; and every citizen, whose entire fortune amounted to 400 000 sesterces, that is, to about £3120 of our money, was enrolled, of course, in the list of knights, who were considered as a middle order between the senators and common people, yet, without any other distinction than the privilege of wearing a gold ring, which was the peculiar badge of their order.' Life of Cicero, vol. i. iii. in note. *M.*

LETTER XX. *To* Cornelius Tacitus.

I have frequent debates with a certain acquaintance of mine, a man of skill and learning, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar as conciseness. I agree with him, that where the case will admit of this precision, it may with propriety be adopted; but insist that, to leave out what is material to be mentioned, or only briefly and cursorily to touch upon those points which should be inculcated, impressed, and urged well home upon the minds of the audience, is a downright fraud upon one's client. In many cases, to deal with the subject at greater length adds strength and weight to our ideas, which frequently produce their impression upon the mind, as iron does upon solid bodies, rather by repeated strokes than a single blow. In answer to this, he usually has recourse to authorities, and produces Lysias * amongst the Grecians, together with Cato and the two Gracchi, among our own countrymen, many of whose speeches certainly are brief and curtailed. In return, I name Demosthenes, Aeschines, Hyperides,† and many others, in opposition to Lysias; while I confront Cato and the Gracchi with Caesar, Pollio,‡ Caelius,§ but, above all, Cicero, whose longest speech is generally considered his best. Why, no doubt about it, in good compositions, as in everything else that is valuable, the more there is of them, the better. You may observe in statues, basso-relievos, pictures, and the human form, and even in animals and trees, that nothing is more graceful than magnitude, if accompanied with proportion. The same holds true in pleading; and even in books a large volume carries a certain beauty and authority in its very size.

* An elegant Attic orator, remarkable for the grace and lucidity of his style, also for his vivid and accurate delineations of character.

† A graceful and powerful orator, and friend of Demosthenes.

‡ A Roman orator of the Augustan age. He was a poet and historian as well, but gained most distinction as an orator.

§ A man of considerable taste, talent, and eloquence, but profligate and extravagant. He was on terms of some intimacy with Cicero.

My antagonist, who is extremely dexterous at evading an argument, eludes all this, and much more, which I usually urge to the same purpose, by insisting that those very individuals, upon whose works I found my opinion, made considerable additions to their speeches when they published them. This I deny; and appeal to the harangues of numberless orators, particularly to those of Cicero, for Murena and Varenus, in which a short, bare notification of certain charges is expressed under mere heads. Whence it appears that many things which he enlarged upon at the time he delivered those speeches were retrenched when he gave them to the public. The same excellent orator informs us that, agreeably to the ancient custom, which allowed only of one counsel on a side, Cluentius had no other advocate than himself; and he tells us further that he employed four whole days in defence of Cornelius; by which it plainly appears that those speeches which, when delivered at their full length, had necessarily taken up so much time at the bar were considerably cut down and pruned when he afterwards compressed them into a single volume, though, I must confess, indeed, a large one. But good pleading, it is objected, is one thing, just composition another. This objection, I am aware, has had some favourers; nevertheless, I am persuaded (though I may, perhaps, be mistaken) that, as it is possible you may have a good pleading which is not a good speech, so a good speech cannot be a bad pleading: for the speech on paper is the model and, as it were, the archetype of the speech that was delivered. It is for this reason we find, in many of the best speeches extant, numberless extemporaneous turns of expression; and even in those which we are sure were never spoken; as, for instance, in the following passage from the speech against Verres:—'A certain mechanic—what's his name? Oh, thank you for helping me to it: yes, I mean Polyclitus.' It follows, then, that the nearer approach a speaker makes to the rules of just composition, the more perfect will he be in his art; always supposing, however, that he has his due share of time allowed him; for, if he be limited of that article, no blame can justly be fixed upon the advocate, though much

certainly upon the judge. The sense of the laws, I am sure, is on my side, which are by no means sparing of the orator's time: it is not conciseness, but fulness, a complete representation of every material circumstance, which they recommend. Now conciseness cannot effect this, unless in the most insignificant cases. Let me add what experience, that unerring guide, has taught me: it has frequently been my province to act both as an advocate and a judge; and I have often also attended as an assessor.* Upon those occasions, I have ever found the judgments of mankind are to be influenced by different modes of application, and that the slightest circumstances frequently produce the most important consequences. The dispositions and understandings of men vary to such an extent that they seldom agree in their opinions concerning any one point in debate before them; or, if they do, it is generally from different motives. Besides, as every man is naturally partial to his own discoveries, when he hears an argument urged which had previously occurred to himself, he will be sure to embrace it as extremely convincing. The orator, therefore, should so adapt himself to his audience as to throw out something which every one of them, in turn, may receive and approve as agreeable to his own particular views. I recollect, once, when Regulus and I were engaged on the same side, his remarking to me, 'You seem to think it necessary to go into every single circumstance: whereas I always take aim at once at my adversary's throat, and there I press him closely.' ('Tis true, he keeps a tight hold of whatever part he has once fixed upon; but the misfortune is, he is extremely apt to fix upon the wrong place.) I replied, it might possibly happen that what he called the *throat* was, in reality, the *knee* or the *ankle*. As for myself, said I, who do not pretend to direct my aim with so much precision, I test every part, I probe every opening; in short, to use a vulgar proverb, *I leave no stone unturned*. And as in agriculture, it is not my vineyards or my woods only, but

* The praetor was assisted by ten assessors, five of whom were senators, and the rest knights. With these he was obliged to consult before he pronounced sentence. *M.*

my fields as well, that I look after and cultivate, and (to carry on the metaphor) as I do not content myself with sowing those fields simply with corn or white wheat, but sprinkle in barley, pulse, and the other kinds of grain; so, in my pleadings at the bar, I scatter broadcast various arguments like so many kinds of seed, in order to reap whatever may happen to come up. For the disposition of your judges is as hard to fathom as uncertain, and as little to be relied on as that of soils and seasons. The comic writer Eupolis,* I remember, mentions it in praise of that excellent orator Pericles, that

> 'On his lips Persuasion hung,
> And powerful Reason rul'd his tongue:
> Thus he alone could boast the art
> To charm at once, and pierce the heart.'

But could Pericles, without the richest variety of expression, and merely by the force of the concise or the rapid style, or both (for they are very different), have thus *charmed* and *pierced* the heart? To delight and to persuade requires time and great command of language; and to leave a *sting* in the minds of the audience is an effect not to be expected from an orator who merely *pinks*, but from him, and him only, who *thrusts in*. Another comic poet,† speaking of the same orator, says,

> 'His mighty words like Jove's own thunder roll:
> Greece hears, and trembles to her inmost soul.'

But it is not the close and reserved; it is the copious, the majestic, and the sublime orator, who thunders, who lightens, who, in short, bears all before him in a confused whirl. There is, undeniably, a just mean in everything; but he equally misses the mark who falls short of it, as he who goes beyond it; he who is too limited as he who is too unrestrained. Hence it is as common a thing to hear our orators condemned for being too jejune and feeble as too excessive and redundant. One is said to have exceeded the bounds of his subject, the other not to have reached

* A contemporary and rival of Aristophanes.
† Aristophanes, Ach. 531.

them. Both, no doubt, are equally in fault, with this difference, however, that in the one the fault arises from an abundance, in the other, from a deficiency; an error, in the former case, which, if it be not the sign of a more correct, is certainly of a more fertile genius. When I say this, I would not be understood to approve that everlasting talker * mentioned in Homer, but that other † described in the following lines:

> 'Frequent and soft, as falls the winter snow,
> Thus from his lips the copious periods flow.'

Not but that I extremely admire him,‡ too, of whom the poet says,

> 'Few were his words, but wonderfully strong.'

Yet, if the choice were given me, I should give the preference to that style resembling *winter snow*, that is, to the full, uninterrupted, and diffusive; in short, to that pomp of eloquence which seems all heavenly and divine. But (it is replied) the harangue of a more moderate length is most generally admired. It is:—but only by indolent people; and to fix the standard by their laziness and false delicacy would be simply ridiculous. Were you to consult persons of this cast, they would tell you, not only that it is best to say little, but that it is best to say nothing at all. Thus, my friend, I have laid before you my opinions upon this subject, and I am willing to change them if not agreeable to yours. But should you disagree with me, pray let me know clearly your reasons why. For, though I ought to yield in this case to your more enlightened judgment, yet, in a point of such consequence, I had rather be convinced by argument than by authority. So if I don't seem to you very wide of the mark, a line or two from you in return, intimating your concurrence, will be sufficient to confirm me in my opinion: on the other hand, if you should think me mistaken, let me have your objections at full length. Does it not look rather like bribery,

* Thersites. Iliad, ii. *v.* 212.
† Ulysses. Iliad, iii. *v.* 222.
‡ Menelaus. Iliad, iii. *v.* 214.

my requiring only a short letter, if you agree with me: but a very long one if you should be of a different opinion. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* PATERNUS.

As I rely very much upon the soundness of your judgment, so I do upon the goodness of your eyes: not because I think your discernment very great (for I don't want to make you conceited), but because I think it as good as mine: which, it must be confessed, is saying a great deal. Joking apart, I like the look of the slaves which were purchased for me on your recommendation very well; all I further care about is, that they be honest: and for this I must depend upon their characters more than their countenances. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* CATILIUS SEVERUS.*

I am at present (and have been a considerable time) detained in Rome, under the most stunning apprehensions. Titus Aristo,† whom I have a singular admiration and affection for, is fallen into a long and obstinate illness, which troubles me. Virtue, knowledge, and good sense, shine out with so superior a lustre in this excellent man that learning herself, and every valuable endowment, seem involved in the danger of his single person. How consummate his knowledge, both in the political and civil laws of his country! How thoroughly conversant is he in every branch of history or antiquity? In a word, there is nothing you might wish to know which he could not teach you. As for me, whenever I would acquaint myself with any abstruse point, I go to him as my store-house. What an engaging sincerity, what dignity in his conversation! how chastened and becoming is his caution! Though he conceives, at once, every point in debate, yet he is as slow to decide as he is quick to apprehend; calmly and deliberately sifting and weighing every opposite reason that is

* Great-grandfather of the Emperor M. Aurelius.
† An eminent lawyer of Trajan's reign.

offered, and tracing it, with a most judicious penetration, from its source through all its remotest consequences. His diet is frugal, his dress plain; and whenever I enter his chamber, and view him reclined upon his couch, I consider the scene before me as a true image of ancient simplicity, to which his illustrious mind reflects the noblest ornament. He places no part of his happiness in ostentation, but in the secret approbation of his conscience, seeking the reward of his virtue, not in the clamorous applauses of the world, but in the silent satisfaction which results from having acted well. In short, you will not easily find his equal, even among our philosophers by outward profession. No, he does not frequent the gymnasia or porticoes,* nor does he amuse his own and others' leisure with endless controversies, but busies himself in the scenes of civil and active life. Many has he assisted with his interest, still more with his advice, and withal in the practice of temperance, piety, justice, and fortitude, he has no superior. You would be astonished, were you there to see, at the patience with which he bears his illness, how he holds out against pain, endures thirst, and quietly submits to this raging fever and to the pressure of those clothes which are laid upon him to promote perspiration. He lately called me and a few more of his particular friends to his bedside, requesting us to ask his physicians what turn they apprehended his distemper would take; that, if they pronounced it incurable, he might voluntarily put an end to his life; but if there were hopes of a recovery, how tedious and difficult soever it might prove, he would calmly wait the event; for so much, he thought, was due to the tears and entreaties of his wife and daughter, and to the affectionate intercession of his friends, as not voluntarily to abandon our hopes, if they were not entirely desperate. A true hero's resolution this, in my estimation, and worthy the highest applause. Instances are frequent in the world, of rushing into the arms of death without reflection and by a sort of blind impulse; but deliberately to weigh the reasons for life or death, and

* The philosophers used to hold their disputations in the gymnasia and porticoes, being places of the most public resort for walking, &c. *M.*

to be determined in our choice as either side of the scale prevails, shows a great mind.* We have had the satisfaction to receive the opinion of his physicians in his favour: may heaven favour their promises and relieve me at length from this painful anxiety. Once easy in my mind, I shall go back to my favourite Laurentum, or, in other words, to my books, my papers and studious leisure. Just now, so much of my time and thoughts are taken up in attendance upon my friend, and anxiety for him, that I have neither leisure nor inclination for any reading or writing whatever. Thus you have my fears, my wishes, and my after-plans. Write me in return, but in a gayer strain, an account not only of what you are and have been doing, but of what you intend doing too. It will be a very sensible consolation to me in this disturbance of mind, to be assured that yours is easy. Farewell.

* The general lawfulness of self-murder was a doctrine by no means universally received in the ancient pagan world; many of the most considerable names, both Greek and Roman, having expressly declared against that practice. Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, have condemned it: even Brutus himself, though he fell by his own hands, in his cooler and more philosophical hours, wrote a treatise,[1] in which he highly condemned Cato, as being guilty of an act both of impiety and cowardice in destroying himself. Virgil also adopts the same sentiments, and represents such unhappy persons as in a state of punishment.

'*Proxima deinde tenent maesti loca, qui sibi letum*
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas: Quam vellent aethere in alto,
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores.'

Aen. vi. 434. M.

TRANSLATION.

'Next comes their portion in the gloom
Who guiltless sent themselves to doom,
And all for loathing of the day
In madness threw their lives away:
How gladly now in upper air
Contempt and beggary would they bear
And labour's sorest pain.'

(Conington.)

[1] Plut. in Brut.

LETTER XXIII. *To* Pompeius Falco.

You ask me whether I think you can with decency act as an advocate during your tribuneship?* It depends very much upon your opinion of that office; whether you look upon it as a mere empty shadow, a title without honour, or as a sacred function, the exercise of which as no power can suspend, so neither ought the person himself who is invested with it. When I was myself in that post (possibly I might be mistaken in thinking I was become of any importance, however, on the supposition that I really was), I entirely quitted the bar. I thought it unbefitting a magistrate, who, upon all occasions, had a right of precedency, and in whose presence everybody is obliged to rise, to be seen standing, while all about him were seated; that he, who has authority to impose silence upon any man, should himself be checked by the clepsydra;† that he, whom it is held impious to interrupt,‡ should be exposed to the scurrilous liberties of bar orators; which, to chastise, would be thought a sort of insolence of office, and yet it would be weakness to overlook. I considered, moreover, the dilemma in which I should find myself, if either my client or his adversary should happen to appeal to me as tribune, whether to interpose my authority, or, by a kind of resignation of my office, to act solely in my private capacity. For these reasons I chose officiating as the public magistrate, rather than as the private advocate. But, with respect to yourself, (I repeat it again) it very much depends upon your opinion of the office in question, and under what character you would choose to appear; remembering always, that a wise man will take upon himself such only as he is capable of sustaining with dignity. Farewell.

* See book ix. letter xiii. note.

† Clepsydrae were used in the Roman law courts, for regulating the duration of the proceedings.

‡ As their characters were held sacred, it was esteemed the highest act of impiety to offer them injury, or so much as to interrupt them when they were speaking. *M.*

LETTER XXIV. *To* BEBIUS.

My friend and guest, Tranquillus, has an inclination to purchase a small farm, of which, as I am informed, an acquaintance of yours intends to dispose. I beg you would endeavour he may get it upon reasonable terms; which will add to his satisfaction in the purchase. A dear bargain is always a disagreeable thing, particularly as it reflects upon the buyer's judgment. There are several circumstances attending this little villa, which (supposing my friend has no objection to the price) are extremely suitable to his taste and desires: the convenient distance from Rome, the goodness of the roads, the smallness of the building, and the very few acres of land around it, which are just enough to amuse him, without taking up his time. To a man of Tranquillus' studious turn, it is sufficient if he have but a small spot to relieve the mind and divert the eye, where he may saunter round his grounds, traverse his single walk, grow familiar with all his little vines, and count the trees in his shrubbery. I mention these particulars to let you see how much he will be obliged to me, as I shall be to you, if you can help him to this convenient little box, at a price which he shall have no occasion to repent. Farewell.

BOOK II.

LETTER I. *To* Voconius Romanus.

Rome has not for many years beheld a more magnificent and memorable spectacle than was lately exhibited in the public funeral of that great, illustrious, and no less fortunate man, Verginius Rufus.* He lived thirty years after he had reached the zenith of his fame. He read poems composed in his honour, he read histories of his achievements, and was himself witness of his fame among posterity. He was thrice raised to the dignity of consul, that he might at least be the highest of subjects, who † had refused to be the first of princes. As he escaped the resentment of those emperors to whom his virtues had given umbrage and even rendered him odious, and ended his days when this best of princes, this friend of mankind,‡ was in quiet posses-

* The ancients seem to have considered fortune as a mark of merit in the person who was thus distinguished. Cicero recommended Pompey to the Romans for their general upon three accounts, as a man of courage, conduct, and *good fortune;* and not only Sylla the dictator, but several of the Roman emperors, as is still to be seen upon their medals, among other titles, gave themselves that of *felix*, or fortunate. *M.*

† 'Verginius Rufus was governor of Upper Germany at the time of the revolt of Julius Vindex in Gaul, A.D. 68. The soldiers of Verginius wished to raise him to the empire, but he refused the honour, and marched against Vindex, who perished before Vesontio. After the death of Nero, Verginius supported the claims of Galba, and accompanied him to Rome. Upon Otho's death, the soldiers again attempted to proclaim Verginius emperor, and in consequence of his refusal of the honour, he narrowly escaped with his life.' (See Smith's Dict. of Greek and Rom. Biog. &c.)

‡ The justness of this glorious title, the *friend of mankind*, which our author here gives to Nerva, is confirmed by the concurrent testimony of all the historians of these times. That excellent emperor's short reign seems, indeed, to have been one uninterrupted series of generous and benevolent actions; and he used to express the satisfaction he felt in being conscious of not having committed a single act which could give offence to any man. *M.*

sion of the empire, it seems as if Providence had purposely preserved him to these times, that he might receive the honour of a public funeral. He reached his eighty-fourth year, in full tranquillity and universally revered, having enjoyed strong health during his lifetime, with the exception of a trembling in his hands, which, however, gave him no pain. His last illness, indeed, was severe and tedious; but even that circumstance added to his reputation. As he was practising his voice with a view of returning his public acknowledgements to the emperor, who had promoted him to the consulship, a large volume he had taken into his hand, and which happened to be too heavy for so old a man to hold standing up, slid from his grasp. In hastily endeavouring to recover it, his foot slipped on the smooth pavement, and he fell down and broke his thigh-bone, which being clumsily set, his age as well being against him, did not properly unite again. The funeral obsequies paid to the memory of this great man have done honour to the emperor, to the age, and to the bar. The consul Cornelius Tacitus* pronounced his funeral oration: and thus his good fortune was crowned by the public applause of so eloquent an orator. He has departed from our midst, full of years, indeed, and of glory; as illustrious by the honours he refused as by those he accepted. Yet still we shall miss him and lament him, as the shining model of a past age; I, especially, shall feel his loss, for I not only admired him as a patriot, but loved him as a friend. We were of the same province, and of neighbouring towns, and our estates were also contiguous. Besides these accidental connections, he was left my guardian, and always treated me with a parent's affection. Whenever I offered myself as a candidate for any office in the state, he constantly supported me with his interest; and although he had long since given up all such services to friends, he would kindly leave his retirement and come to give me his vote in person. On the day on which the priests nominate those they consider most worthy of the sacred office,† he constantly proposed me. Even in his last

* The historian.

† Namely, of augurs. 'This college, as regulated by Sylla, consisted of fifteen, who were all persons of the first distinction in Rome

illness, apprehending the possibility of the senate's appointing him one of the five commissioners for reducing the public expenses, he fixed upon me, young as I am, to bear his excuses, in preference to so many other friends, elderly men too, and of consular rank, and said to me, 'Had I a son of my own, I would entrust you with this matter.' And so I cannot but lament his death, as though it were premature, and pour out my grief into your bosom; if indeed one has any right to grieve, or to call it death at all, which to such a man terminates his mortality, rather than ends his life. He lives, and will live on for ever; and his fame will extend and be more celebrated by posterity, now that he is gone from our sight. I had much else to write to you, but my mind is full of this. I keep thinking of Verginius: I see him before me: I am for ever fondly yet vividly imagining that I hear him, am speaking to him, embrace him. There are men amongst us, his fellow-citizens, perhaps, who may rival him in virtue; but not one that will ever approach him in glory. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Paulinus.

I am angry: I do not know whether I have any right to be, but I am. Love, you know, is apt to be capricious, frequently ungovernable, *exigeant* always. There is great, I do not know whether just, occasion: but taking it for granted there is, I am exceedingly angry at not having heard from you all this while. One possible means of appeasing me is left you; let your letters for the future be very frequent and very long; this is the only excuse I shall take, I shall believe in no others. I am not going to listen to 'I was not in town,' or 'I was too busy.' The gods avert! 'I was too unwell.' As for me, I am enjoying, at my villa, the alternate delights of reading and doing nothing, those offspring of an uninterrupted leisure. Farewell.

it was a priesthood for life, of a character indelible, which no crime or forfeiture could efface; it was necessary that every candidate should be nominated to the people by two augurs, who gave a solemn testimony upon oath of his dignity and fitness for that office.' Middleton's Life of Cicero, p. 147. *M.*

LETTER III. *To* NEPOS.

The great fame of Isaeus * had already preceded him here; but we find him even more wonderful than we had heard. He possesses the utmost readiness, copiousness, and abundance of language: he always speaks extempore, and his lectures are as finished as though he had spent a long time over their written composition. His style is Greek, or rather the genuine Attic. His exordiums are terse, elegant, attractive, and occasionally impressive and majestic. He suggests several subjects for discussion, allows his audience their choice, sometimes to even name which side he shall take, rises, arranges himself, and begins. At once he has everything almost equally at command. Recondite meanings of things are suggested to you, and words—what words they are! exquisitely chosen and polished. These extempore speeches of his show the wideness of his reading, and how much practice he has had in composition. His preface is to the point, his narrative lucid, his summing up forcible, his rhetorical ornament imposing. In a word, he teaches, entertains, and affects you; and you are at a loss to decide which of the three he does best. His reflections are frequent, his syllogisms also are frequent, condensed, and carefully finished, a result not easily attainable even with the pen. As for his memory, you would hardly believe what it is capable of. He repeats from a long way back what he has previously delivered extempore, without missing a single word. This marvellous faculty he has acquired by dint of great application and practice, for night and day he does nothing, hears nothing, says nothing else. He has passed his sixtieth year and is still only a rhetorician, and I know no class of men more single-hearted, more genuine, more excellent than this class. We who have to go through the rough work of the bar and of real disputes unavoidably contract a certain unprincipled adroitness. The school, the lecture-room, the imaginary case, all this, on the other hand, is perfectly innocent and harmless, and equally enjoyable, especially to old people, for what can be happier

* Alluded to by Juvenal, Sat. iii. 74.

at that time of life than to enjoy what we found pleasantest in our young days? I consider Isaeus then, not only the most eloquent, but the happiest, of men, and if you are not longing to make his acquaintance, you must be made of stone and iron. So, if not upon my account, or for any other reason, come, for the sake of hearing this man, at least. Have you never read of a certain inhabitant of Cadiz who was so impressed with the name and fame of Livy that he came from the remotest corner of the earth on purpose to see him, and, his curiosity gratified, went straight home again. It is utter want of taste, shows simple ignorance, is almost an actual disgrace to a man, not to set any high value upon a proficiency in so pleasing, noble, refining a science. 'I have authors,' you will reply, 'here in my own study, just as eloquent.' True: but then those authors you can read at any time, while you cannot always get the opportunity of *hearing* eloquence. Besides, as the proverb says, 'The living voice is that which sways the soul;' yes, far more. For notwithstanding what one reads is more clearly understood than what one hears, yet the utterance, countenance, garb,* aye and the very gestures of the speaker, alike concur in fixing an impression upon the mind; that is, unless we disbelieve the truth of Aeschines' statement, who, after he had read to the Rhodians that celebrated speech† of Demosthenes, upon their expressing their admiration of it, is said to have added, 'Ah! what would you have said, could you have heard the wild beast himself?' And

* The ancients thought everything that concerned an orator worthy their attention, even to his very *dress*. Ovid mentions the *habit* as well as the air and mien of Germanicus, as expressive of his eloquence.

> '*Dum . . . . silens adstat, status est vultusque diserti,*
> *Spemque decens doctae vocis amictus habet.*'
>
> De Pont. l. ii. 5.

> 'Ere yet he speaks, the orator is seen
> In all the eloquence of *garb* and mien.'
>
> *M.*

† His speech 'On the Crown,' delivered in reply to a speech of Aeschines against Ctesiphon, who had proposed that Demosthenes should be rewarded with a golden crown for his eminent services to the state. Aeschines was completely defeated, and left Athens in consequence. Subsequently he resided at Rhodes, where he taught oratory.

Aeschines, if we may take Demosthenes' word for it, was no mean elocutionist; yet, he could not but confess that the speech would have sounded far finer from the lips of its author. I am saying all this with a view to persuading you to hear Isaeus, if even for the mere sake of being able to say you have heard him. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* CALVINA.

Had your father left several creditors, or, indeed, a single one except myself, you might reasonably perhaps scruple* to enter upon his estate, which, with such encumbrances, might prove a burden too heavy even for one of our sex to undertake. But since, out of regard to the affinity that subsisted between us, I was content to remain sole creditor, whilst others, I will not say more importunate, but certainly more careful after their own interests, were paid off; and as I contributed a hundred thousand sesterces† towards your wedding dowry, over and above the sum your father charged upon this estate for your fortune, which may also be considered as my gift, as it was to be paid out of a fund before appropriated to me, you can require no stronger pledge that you will find me an easy creditor. You might be sure of this, and ought to take up your property to protect your father's memory and reputation. But to give you a more substantial encouragement than mere words, I make you entirely free of the debt he owed me. Do not hesitate about accepting this present from me, upon the supposition that I can ill afford so large a sum. It is true my means are but moderate, the expenses required by my position not inconsiderable, while the annual income out of my estate, owing to the quality of the ground, is as uncertain as it is small: yet, what I want in wealth, I make up by economy, which supplies my bounty like a fountain. I must be careful, no doubt, not to exhaust it by over-profusion; but it is a

* By the ancient Roman law, the heir, if he entered upon the estate, was liable to the debts of the testator or ancestor, even though the estate were not sufficient to pay them. *M.*

† About £780.

caution which I shall observe towards others: with respect to yourself, reason will justify my liberality, though it should overflow its proper bounds. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Lupercus.

I send you at last the speech you have kept entreating me for, and which I have often promised you: but this is not the whole; part of it I am still keeping back and giving the finishing touches to. Meanwhile, I thought there would be no harm in my submitting to your criticism the completer portions. Pray read it over with the same close attention that I wrote it; for I never undertook any work which required so much. In my previous speeches, my diligence and integrity only were concerned; in the present one I had to manifest my patriotism. But whilst I took a delight in the task of praising and paying honour to my native land, and endeavoured not only to support its rights but to heighten its glory, my speech insensibly swelled its dimensions. However, I beg you will cut it down, even in *these* parts, wherever you think necessary; for when I consider the fastidious delicacy of my readers, I am sensible that my surest recommendation to them lies in the moderate length of my book. But at the same time that I abandon my performance to your utmost severity in this instance, I must ask your leniency towards it in several others. Some concession must be made to the taste of young people, especially where the subject admits of this. In descriptions of places, for example, which you will meet with pretty frequently in this volume, it is perfectly permissible to not merely draw these with strict historical accuracy, but to idealize slightly as well. Should any gloomy objector take offence at this, and think our strain livelier than befits the gravity of this sort of composition, the other parts will, I trust, amply satisfy his severity, and obtain indulgence for its gayer colourings. I have endeavoured to engage different kinds of readers by different ways of expressing myself. And although I am afraid there are some passages that will displease some, as not com-

mending themselves to their particular tastes, yet, upon the whole, its variety, I trust, will recommend it in general: just as at an elegant dinner, although we do not, perhaps, taste every dish, we may yet admire the general arrangement of the whole; and should we happen to meet with something we find we do not care about, yet that does not take away our relish for what we do like. I am not so presumptuous as to pretend I have actually furnished such a collation; I would simply be understood to mean that I have made the attempt, and perhaps not altogether unsuccessfully, if you will exercise your skill upon what I send you now, and upon the rest, to follow, shortly. You will tell me, I know, that you cannot form a sufficiently exact opinion till you have seen the whole. I quite admit this. However, for the present you may make yourself acquainted with this detached part, in which you will find some things, perhaps, that will bear a separate correction. Supposing you were to be shown the head, or any other member, disjointed from a complete statue, although you could not determine what proportion it bore to the entire figure, yet you would be able to judge of the elegance of that particular member. On what other principle is it that specimens of books are handed about, but that it is supposed the beauties of particular portions may be discerned, without viewing their relation to the whole The pleasure I take in getting a talk with you has carried me farther than I intended. But I stop here, for fear of exceeding in a letter the bounds I am for setting even to a speech. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* AVITUS.

It would be a long story, and of no great importance, to tell you by what accident I found myself dining the other day with an individual with whom I am by no means intimate, and who, in his own opinion, does things in good style and economically as well, but according to mine, with meanness and extravagance combined. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself and a few more of us, whilst those placed before the rest of the company

consisted simply of cheap dishes and scraps. There were, in small bottles, three different kinds of wine; not that the guests might take their choice, but that they might not have any option in their power; one kind being for himself, and for us; another sort for his lesser friends (for it seems he has degrees of friends), and the third for his own freedmen and ours. My neighbour,* reclining next me, observing this, asked me if I approved the arrangement. Not at all, I told him. 'Pray then,' he asked, 'what is your method upon such occasions?' 'Mine,' I returned, 'is to give all my visitors the same reception; for when I give an invitation, it is to entertain, not *distinguish*,† my company: I place every man upon my own level whom I admit to my table.' 'Not excepting even your freedmen?' 'Not excepting even my freedmen, whom I consider on these occasions my guests, as much as any of the rest.' He replied, 'This must cost you a great deal.' 'Not in the least.' 'How can that be?' 'Simply because, although my freedmen don't drink the same wine as myself, yet I drink the same as they do.' And, no doubt about it, if a man is wise enough to moderate his appetite, he will not find it such a very expensive thing to share with all his visitors what he takes himself. Restrain it, keep it in, if you wish to be a true economist. You will find temperance a far better way of saving than treating other people rudely can be. Why do I say all this? Why, for fear a young man of your high character and promise should be imposed upon by this immoderate luxury which prevails at some tables, under the specious notion of frugality. Whenever any folly of this sort falls under my eye, I shall, just because I care for you, point it out to you as an example you ought to shun. Remember, then,

* The ancient Greeks and Romans did not sit up at the table as we do, but reclined round it on couches, three and sometimes even four occupying one couch, at least this latter was the custom among the Romans. Each guest lay flat upon his chest while eating, reaching out his hand from time to time to the table, for what he might require. As soon as he had made a sufficient meal, he turned over upon his left side, leaning on the elbow.

† See, for a full and graphic account of the invidious distinctions customary at that period, at the tables of certain of the richer classes, Juvenal's fifth Satire, in Gifford's translation.

nothing is more to be avoided than this modern alliance of luxury with meanness; odious enough when existing separate and distinct, but still more hateful where you meet with them together. Farewell

LETTER VII. *To* MACRINUS.

The senate decreed yesterday, on the emperor's motion, a triumphal statue to Vestricius Spurinna: not as they would to many others, who never were in action, or saw a camp, or heard the sound of a trumpet, unless at a show; but as it would be decreed to those who have justly bought such a distinction with their blood, their exertions, and their deeds. Spurinna forcibly restored the king of the Bructeri* to his throne; and this by the noblest kind of victory; for he subdued that warlike people by the terror of the mere display of his preparation for the campaign. This is his reward as a hero, while, to console him for the loss of his son Cottius, who died during his absence upon that expedition, they also voted a statue to the youth; a very unusual honour for one so young; but the services of the father deserved that the pain of so severe a wound should be soothed by no common balm. Indeed Cottius himself evinced such remarkable promise of the highest qualities that it is but fitting his short, limited term of life should be extended, as it were, by this kind of immortality. He was so pure and blameless, so full of dignity, and commanded such respect, that he might have challenged in moral goodness much older men, with whom he now shares equal honours. Honours, if I am not mistaken, conferred not only to perpetuate the memory of the deceased youth, and in consolation to the surviving father, but for the sake of public example also. This will rouse and stimulate our young men to cultivate every worthy principle, when they see such rewards bestowed upon one of their own years, provided he deserve them: at the same time that men of quality will be encouraged to

* 'A people of Germany. They dwelt on each side of the Amisia (Ems), and extended south as far as the Luppia (Lippe).' (See Smith's Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography.)

beget children and to have the joy and satisfaction of leaving a worthy race behind, if their children survive them, or of so glorious a consolation, should they survive their children. Looking at it in this light then, I am glad, upon public grounds, that a statue is decreed Cottius: and for my own sake too, just as much; for I loved this most favoured, gifted, youth, as ardently as I now grievously miss him amongst us. So that it will be a great satisfaction to me to be able to look at this figure from time to time as I pass by, contemplate it, stand underneath, and walk to and fro before it. For if having the pictures of the departed placed in our own homes lightens sorrow, how much more those public representations of them which are not only memorials of their air and countenance, but of their glory and honour besides? Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Caninius.

What are you doing with yourself? Reading, hunting, fishing, or all of them together? You can combine all these, I know, on the banks of our favourite Larius, for the lake supplies you with fish, the woods engirdling it with game, each in profusion, whilst you must find every opportunity for reading, down in that most secluded of seclusions. However, whatever you may be doing, whether any or all of these pleasant things, far be it from me to say, 'I grudge you them!' Still, I must confess, I am restless and impatient at my not being able, as well, to enjoy what I long after as eagerly as a man in a fever longs for wine, baths, and spring water. Shall I never, if they refuse to be loosened, break away from these close-binding cords? Never, I fear; fresh employment keeps adding itself to the old, while my earlier work is still uncompleted: such an endless train of business is daily pressing upon me, and riveting my chains still faster. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Apollinaris.

I am extremely anxious for the success of the petition which Euritius has presented to the senate; and I feel for

my friend what I have never felt for myself. My own credit, character, and dignity besides, are, in a measure, at stake. I obtained for him of Caesar * the distinction of wearing the laticlave,† and also the office of quaestor; as it was by my interest too that he is indulged with the privilege of petitioning for the tribunate; which if the senate should refuse him, I am afraid it will be thought I imposed upon the emperor. I must therefore, in support of my own character, endeavour that the judgment of the public may confirm the opinion which Caesar has conceived of him, upon my representations. But if I were not for these reasons obliged to interest myself in the success of Euritius, yet his extreme probity, excessive good sense, and extensive learning,‡ would incline me to assist him to the utmost of my power; as, indeed, he and his whole family are deserving of the highest commendation. His father, Euritius Clarus, is a man of blameless life and ancient simplicity of manners; and not only an eloquent and experienced advocate, but defends every case he undertakes with a courage and integrity no less to his honour than his singular modesty. Septitius, his uncle, is one of the sincerest, simplest-minded, most open, honest men I ever knew. There is a friendly contention amongst them who shall show me most affection; which I am persuaded they all equally feel for me. I have now an opportunity of obliging the whole family, in the single person of Euritius; accordingly I canvass all my friends, entreat them, ferret them out, apply to them indoors and out-of-doors, and, in a word, exert my whole interest and credit to serve him. I must beg of you likewise to take some share of this trouble with me: I will do you the same good turn whenever you require it, and even without your asking. You have many friends, admirers, and visitors, so only show yourself a well-wisher to Euritius in this affair, and numbers will be ready to second your inclinations. Farewell.

* Trajan.

† The distinguishing badge of the senatorial order. It was a broad purple band extending perpendicularly from the neck down the centre of the tunic.

‡ Euritius was a zealous patron of literature. Later, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, he rose to be consul.

LETTER X. *To* Octavius.

You obstinate, or, rather, you hard-hearted, almost cruel, man, keeping such valuable work from the world all this while! How long do you intend grudging your friends the pleasure, and yourself the glory, of your poetical productions? Suffer them, I entreat you, to come abroad, and be admired; as admired they assuredly will be wherever the Roman language is understood. The public has been earnestly expecting them for some time, and you ought not to disappoint or delay its expectation any longer. Some few poems of yours have already, contrary to your inclinations, broken their prison and escaped to light: if you do not collect these together, like wanderers they will find an owner some time or other. Remember, my friend, the mortality of human nature, from which you can only preserve your own name by a monument of this sort; all other kinds, frail and transitory as the men whose memory they seek to perpetuate, sink away and cease to be. You will say, I suppose, as usual, *Let my friends see to that.* From the bottom of my soul I wish you may find friends whose care, fidelity, and learning render them able and willing to undertake such a responsibility as this! But surely it is not altogether prudent in any man to expect from others what he will not do for himself. However, as to this publication, I will press you no farther; be that when you shall think proper. But let me, at least, prevail with you to recite them, that you may be more disposed to send them out into the world, from the very flattering reception which I have long ventured to anticipate their receiving from the assembly. I please myself with imagining the crowd, the admiration, the applause, and even the hush that will attend your recital; for the silence of the audience, let it be only intense, earnest, and desirous of hearing more, is as agreeable to me as the loudest approbation. Do not then, by this endless delay, defraud your studies any longer of so rich and certain a recompense: a delay which, where carried to excess, is apt, I fear, to be charged to idleness, indolence, and even timidity. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* ARRIANUS.

You take pleasure, I know, in hearing of anything done in the senate, worthy that august assembly: for, although love of peace and quiet has called you into retirement, your heart still retains its zeal for the majesty of the commonwealth. Accept then the following account of what lately passed in that venerable body; a transaction for ever memorable by its importance, and not only remarkable from the quality of the person concerned, but salutary by the severity of the example. Marius Priscus, formerly proconsul of Africa, being impeached by that province, instead of entering upon his defence, petitioned that a commission of select judges might be appointed for his trial. Cornelius Tacitus and myself, being by the senate assigned counsel for that province, thought it our duty to inform the house that the crimes alleged against Priscus were of too atrocious a character to fall within the cognizance of an inferior court: for he was charged with venality in the administration of justice, and even of taking money to pass sentence of death upon persons perfectly innocent. Fronto Catius rose in his behalf, and pleaded that the whole enquiry might be confined to the single article of bribery; expert in drawing tears from his audience, he filled the sails of his speech with the breath of pity, so to speak. The debate grew warm, and there was considerable division of opinion. Some argued that it was a matter which legally did not come under the discussion of the senate: others, that the house was at liberty to proceed upon it, or not, as it should see proper, and that the defendant ought to be punished according to the full measure of his guilt. At last Julius Ferox, the consul elect, a man of great worth and integrity, proposed that judges should be granted him provisionally, and in the meanwhile that those persons to whom it was alleged he had sold innocent blood should be summoned to appear. Not only the majority of the senate gave in to this opinion, but, after all the contention that had been raised, it was the one single point on which there was general agreement. I could not but observe, upon this occasion, that

feelings of relenting and compassion, though they at first operate with great force, gradually give way before the cool dictates of reason and reflection; and that numbers will support an opinion, by joining in the general voice, which they would never singly and deliberately defend. The fact is there is no discerning the right side of a question amidst the confused murmurs of a crowd; one must consider it apart, to view it in its true light. Vitellius Honoratus and Flavius Martianus, the persons ordered to be summoned, were brought before the house. Honoratus was charged with having given three hundred thousand sesterces * to procure a sentence of banishment against a Roman knight, as well as the capital conviction of seven of his friends. Against Martianus it was alleged that he gave seven hundred thousand,† in order to procure another person's being condemned to suffer various tortures; which were accordingly inflicted, and the unhappy man was first whipped, afterwards sent to work in the mines, and finally strangled in prison. But the death of Honoratus opportunely prevented the enquiry upon him. Martianus appeared, but without Priscus. Tullius Cerealis, therefore, a man of consular rank, thought proper to move that Priscus, agreeably to his privilege as a senator, might have notice of the business then before the house: whether it was because he thought his being present would raise more compassion, or more resentment towards him; or because, as I am inclined to believe, he thought it most equitable, that as the charge was against them both, so they should both join in the defence and be acquitted or condemned together. The affair was adjourned to the next meeting of the senate, the most august and solemn I was ever present at. The emperor ‡ himself (for he was consul) presided. It happened likewise to be the month of January,§ a season upon many accounts remarkable, and particularly for the great number of senators it always brings together. Not only the importance of the case, the expectation and rumour that had been increased by the several adjournments, but that innate curiosity in

* About £2340. † About £5460. ‡ Trajan.

§ In this month the several magistrates entered upon their respective offices. *M.*

mankind to acquaint themselves with everything remarkable and uncommon, drew the people from all parts. Picture to yourself the concern and anxiety we, who were to speak on such a matter as this before that assembly, and in Caesar's presence, must have felt! I have often pleaded in the senate; and, indeed, there is no place where I obtain a more favourable hearing; yet, as if the scene had been entirely new to me, I found myself experiencing an unwonted sensation of distress upon this occasion. Besides, the unusual difficulty of the case, which I have already alluded to, was continually before my mind; a man, but yesterday of consular rank and a member of the sacred college,* now stood before me stripped of all his honours. It was a very heavy task then, devolving upon me, I felt, to have to accuse one already condemned; who, weighed down as he was by the frightful character of the accusation, was still, as it were, screened by the pity felt for him in respect of a conviction already obtained. However, I composed and collected myself sufficiently to begin my speech; and the applause I received was equal to the anxiety I had suffered. I spoke for almost five successive hours (for they indulged me above an hour beyond the time at first allotted me), and what at my first setting out had most contributed to raise my apprehensions proved in the event greatly to my advantage. The goodness, the care, (I dare not say the solicitude) of the emperor were so great towards me that he frequently spoke to my freedman, who stood behind me, to desire me to spare my voice and lungs; fearing I was exerting my strength beyond what the delicacy of my constitution could bear. Claudius Marcellinus replied in behalf of Martianus; after which the assembly broke up until the next day, for it was getting dusk, so there was not time to proceed further. The next day, Salvius Liberalis, an acute, exact, animated, and eloquent † speaker, spoke in defence of

* *Septemvir epulonum.* An office of considerable dignity. The *septemviri epulonum* were seven officers appointed to attend to the arrangements of the several annual sacred festivals; they formed a college, and were one of the four great religious corporations at Rome.

† And a bold advocate too, apparently. There occurs an incidental notice of him in Suetonius, as follows. 'Salvius Liberalis, in pleading the cause of a rich man under prosecution, presuming to say, "What is

Priscus: and he exerted all his talents upon this occasion. C. Tacitus replied to him, in a strain of the most powerful eloquence, and with a certain dignity which distinguishes all his speeches. Fronto Catius rose a second time in favour of Priscus, and in a very fine speech endeavoured, as indeed the case required, rather to soften the judges than defend his client. The evening coming on, the senate proceeded no further that day, but met on the next, and entered upon the proofs. It was much to the honour of the senate, and worthy of ancient Rome, to see the assembly thus adjourned only for the night, and then reassembling for three successive days. The excellent Cornutus Tertullus, consul elect, ever firm in the cause of truth, moved that the seven hundred thousand sesterces * Marius had received should be paid back into the treasury, Marius himself be banished the city and the Italian confines, and Martianus, over and above this sentence, be banished Africa as well. He added in conclusion that Tacitus and I having firmly and conscientiously discharged the parts assigned us, the senate should declare we had executed our trust to their satisfaction. The consuls elect, and all of consular rank as well, agreed with Tertullus, except Pompeius Collega: he proposed that the seven hundred thousand sesterces should be refunded into the treasury, Martianus be banished during five years only, and Marius suffer no other punishment than had already been inflicted upon him for extortion.† There was a large party for both opinions, and perhaps the majority secretly inclined to the laxer and more lenient sentence; for many of those who appeared at first to agree with Cornutus now followed the new proposal. But upon a division of the house, all those who had stood near the consuls' seats began to go over to Cornutus. Upon this, those who were for allowing themselves to be numbered in their places for Collega went over to

it to Caesar if Hipparchus possesses a hundred millions of sesterces?" he (Vespasian) commended him for it.' See Vespasian, c. xiii Thomson's translation (Bohn).

* Honoratus being dead, that part of the charge against Marius, which related to his taking three hundred thousand sesterces of him, could not, it seems, be proved. *M.*

† A forfeiture of four times the sum received. *M.*

the opposite side, Collega being left with only a few by him; so that he complained strongly, afterwards, of the behaviour of those who had urged him to this vote, particularly Regulus, for abandoning him in a step which he had himself advised. There is, indeed, such an inconsistency in the general character of Regulus that he will at once brave or shrink back from anything. Thus ended this important trial; * but a public matter still remains to be settled. Hostilius Firminus, lieutenant † to Marius Priscus, is strongly charged with being an accomplice: as it appears from Martianus' account-books, also from a speech which he (Martianus) made at a public meeting at Leptis,‡ that Firminus was accessory to Priscus' most disgraceful administration, had bargained to receive from Martianus fifty thousand denarii,§ and moreover had actually received ten thousand sesterces,‖ under the head of perfume money, for a most debasing office, though one exquisitely adapted to so consummate a fop. It was agreed, on the motion of Cornutus, to proceed against him at the next meeting of the senate; for, whether by accident or design, he was absent at the time. Thus you have an account of what is doing in town. Let me know, in return, your country news; how your shrubs, your corn, and your choice flocks of sheep, are going on. In a word, if you do not send me an equally long letter, you must only expect short ones for the future from me. Farewell.

* Marius got off pretty easily, after all. He was banished, but kept the money and went into some pleasant place of retirement beyond the frontier. Juvenal vigorously satirizes the effect of the sentence passed upon him, in the following lines (Sat. i. 45–50):

> 'Ye gods!—what rage, what frenzy fires my brain,
> . . . . When, by a juggling sentence damned in vain
> (For who, that holds the plunder, heeds the pain?)
> Marius to wine devotes his morning hours,
> And laughs, in exile, at the offended Powers,
> While sighing o'er the victory she won,
> The province finds herself but more undone.'
>
> (Gifford's translation.)

† See letter xii. note. ‡ In Africa. § About £1770.
‖ About £78.

LETTER XII. *To* the Same

The public matter I mentioned to you in my last, relating to the affair of Priscus, is at length, I will not say finished as it ought to be; however, it is finished. Firminus, being brought before the senate, made such a sort of defence as a man generally does who is conscious of detected guilt. The consuls elect were much divided as to how to punish him. Cornutus Tertullus moved he should be expelled from the senate, but Acutius Nerva proposed his only being declared for ever incapable of holding the office of proconsul: and this, the apparently milder sentence, prevailed: though, really, it is the harder and severer one of the two. For can any position be more pitiable than that of being cut off and excluded from all hopes of enjoying those honours to which a senator is entitled, without escaping any of the work and worry of attending senate-house meetings? And, after being so disgraced, what punishment could be heavier than, *not*, to be allowed to bury oneself in solitude, but, remaining in this conspicuous station, to be marked out by it to the gaze and scorn of the world? Apart, though, from all this, looking at the matter in a public light, what can be more inappropriate or indecent than to allow a person, after having been publicly censured by the senate, to retain his seat in the house and be ranked with his judges? For a man excluded the proconsulship, because he behaved infamously as a lieutenant,* to sit in judgment upon proconsuls? For one proved guilty of extortion, to condemn or acquit others of similar crimes? Yet this motion found the voice of the majority. Votes go by number, not by weight; nor can it be otherwise in assemblies of this sort, where nothing is so unequal as the equality which prevails in them; for although every member has the same right of suffrage, every member has not the same strength of judgment to direct it. You see I have been as

* The lieutenant accompanied the proconsul, or governor, for the judging of inferior causes and the management of all smaller concerns; everything of moment being referred to the immediate care of the governor. *M.*

good as my word to have fulfilled the promise I gave you in my last letter, which must have reached you, I suppose, by this time, for I entrusted it to a quick and careful messenger—unless he has met with any hindrance on the way. It is your duty now to make me as full a return for this and my former as the scene you are in will afford. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* PRISCUS.

As I know you eagerly embrace every opportunity of obliging me, so there is no man whom I had rather be under an obligation to. I apply to you, therefore, in preference to anyone else, for a favour which I am extremely desirous of obtaining. You, who are commander-in-chief of a very considerable army, have many opportunities of exercising your generosity: and the length of time you have enjoyed that post must have enabled you to provide for all your own friends. I hope you will now turn your eyes upon some of mine: as indeed they are but a few. Your generous disposition, I know, would be better pleased if the number were greater, but one or two will suffice my modest desires; at present I will only mention Voconius Romanus. His father was of great distinction among the Roman knights, and his father-in law, or, I might more properly call him, his second father, (for his affectionate treatment of Voconius entitles him to that appellation) was still more conspicuous. His mother was one of the most considerable ladies of Upper Spain: you know what character the people of that province bear, and how remarkable they are for their strictness of their manners. As for himself, he lately held the post of flamen.* Now, from the time when first we were students together, I have felt very tenderly attached to him. We lived under the same roof, in town and country, we joked together, we

* 'Any Roman priest devoted to the service of one particular god was designated Flamen, receiving a distinguishing epithet from the deity to whom he ministered. The office was understood to last for life; but a flamen might be compelled to resign for a breach of duty, or even on account of the occurrence of an ill omened accident while discharging his functions.' Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities

shared each other's serious thoughts: for where indeed could I have found a truer friend or pleasanter companion than he? In his conversation, and even in his very voice and countenance, there is a rare sweetness; as at the bar he displays talents of a high order; acuteness, elegance, ease, and skill: and he writes such letters * too that were you to read them you would imagine they had been dictated by the Muses themselves. I have a very great affection for him, as he has for me. Even in the earlier part of our lives, I warmly embraced every opportunity of doing him all the good services which then lay in my power, as I have lately obtained for him from our most gracious prince † the privilege ‡ granted to those who have three children: a favour which, though Caesar very rarely bestows, and always with great caution, yet he conferred, at my request, in such a matter as to give it the air and grace of being his own choice. The best way of showing that I think he deserves the kindnesses he has already received from me is by increasing them, especially as he always accepts my services so gratefully as to deserve more. Thus I have shown you what manner of man Romanus is, how thoroughly I have proved his worth, and how much I love him. Let me entreat you to honour him with your patronage in a way suitable to the generosity of your heart, and the eminence of your station. But above all let him have your affection; for though you were to confer upon him the utmost you have in your

* It appears from this and some other passages in these letters that the art of letter-writing was esteemed by the Romans in the number of liberal and polite accomplishments; and we find Cicero mentioning, with great pleasure, in some of his letters to Atticus, the elegant specimen he had received from his son, of his genius in this direction. (Ad Att. lxv. 16, 17.) It seems, indeed, to have formed part of their education. Pliny, in a subsequent letter (book vii. letter ix.), in which he prescribes a method of study to one who desired his opinions upon the subject, particularly recommends to him performances of this kind. *M.*

† Trajan.

‡ By a law passed A.U. 762, it was enacted that every citizen of Rome who had three children should be excused from all troublesome offices where he lived. This privilege the emperors sometimes extended to those who were not legally entitled to it. See book vii. letter xvi. in note; and book x. letter xcv. in note. *M.*

power to bestow, you can give him nothing more valuable than your friendship. That you may see he is worthy of it, even to the closest degree of intimacy, I send you this brief sketch of his tastes, character, his whole life, in fact. I should continue my intercessions in his behalf, but that I know you prefer not being pressed, and I have already repeated them in every line of this letter: for, to show a good reason for what one asks is true intercession, and of the most effectual kind. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* MAXIMUS.

You guessed correctly: I am much engaged in pleading before the Hundred. The business there is more fatiguing than pleasant. Trifling, inconsiderable cases, mostly; it is very seldom that anything worth speaking of, either from the importance of the question or the rank of the persons concerned, comes before them. There are very few lawyers either whom I take any pleasure in working with. The rest, a parcel of impudent young fellows, many of whom one knows nothing whatever about, come here to get some practice in speaking, and conduct themselves so forwardly and with such utter want of deference that my friend Attilius exactly hit it, I think, when he made the observation that 'boys set out at the bar with cases in the Court of the Hundred as they do at school with Homer,' intimating that at both places they begin where they should end. But in former times (so my elders tell me) no youth, even of the best families, was allowed in unless introduced by some person of consular dignity. As things are now, since every fence of modesty and decorum is broken down, and all distinctions are levelled and confounded, the present young generation, so far from waiting to be introduced, break in of their own free will. The audience at their heels are fit attendants upon such orators; a low rabble of hired mercenaries, supplied by contract. They get together in the middle of the court, where the dole is dealt round to them as openly as if they were in a dining-room: and at this noble price they run from court to court. The Greeks have an appropriate name in their language

for this sort of people, importing that they are applauders by profession,* and we stigmatize them with the opprobrious title of table-flatterers:† yet the dirty business alluded to increases every day. It was only yesterday two of my domestic officers,‡ mere striplings, were *hired* to cheer somebody or other, at three denarii a-piece:§ this is what the highest eloquence goes for. Upon these terms we fill as many benches as we please, and gather a crowd; this is how those rending shouts are raised, as soon as the individual standing up in the middle of the ring gives the signal. For, you must know, these honest fellows, who understand nothing of what is said, or, if they did, could not hear it, would be at a loss, without a signal, how to time their applause: for many of them don't hear a syllable, and are as noisy as any of the rest. If, at any time, you should happen to be passing by when the court is sitting, and feel at all interested to know how any speaker is acquitting himself, you have no occasion to give yourself the trouble of getting up on to the judges' platform, no need to listen; it is easy enough to find out, for you may be quite sure he that gets most applause deserves it the least. Largius Licinus was the first to introduce this fashion; but then he went no farther than to go round and solicit an audience. I know, I remember hearing this from my tutor Quinctilian. 'I used,' he told me, 'to go and hear Domitius Afer,‖ and as he was pleading once before the Hundred in his usual slow and impressive manner, hearing, close to him, a most immoderate and unusual noise, and being a good deal surprised at this, he left off: the noise ceased, and he began again: he was interrupted a second time, and a third. At last he enquired who it was that was speaking? He was told, Licinus. Upon which, he broke off the case, exclaiming, "Eloquence is no more!"' The truth is it had only begun to decline then, when in Afer's opinion it no longer existed: whereas now it is almost

* σοφοκλεῖς. † *Laudiceni.*

‡ In the original it is *nomenclatores; nomenclator* meant a kind of master of the ceremonies, whose business it was to announce the names of the clients and dependents, as he severally introduced them to the patron. *M.*

§ About 2*s.* 2*d.* ‖ Quinctilian's tutor.

extinct. I am ashamed to tell you of the mincing and affected pronunciation of the speakers, and of the shrill-voiced applause with which their effusions are received; nothing seems wanting to complete this sing-song performance except claps, or rather cymbals and tambourines. Howlings indeed (for I can call such applause, which would be indecent even in the theatre, by no other name) abound in plenty. Up to this time the interest of my friends and the consideration of my early time of life have kept me in this court, as I am afraid they might think I was doing it to shirk work rather than to avoid these indecencies, were I to leave it just yet: however, I go there less frequently than I did, and am thus affecting a gradual retreat. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* VALERIANUS.

How goes on your old estate at Marsi? And how do you find your new purchase? Do you like the land as well since it has become your own? *That* would be extraordinary indeed! for an object in possession seldom retains the same charms that it had in pursuit. As for myself, the estate my mother left me uses me but ill; however, I value it for her sake, and besides I have grown callous by long endurance. Frequent occasions of complaint end in making one ashamed to complain any more. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* ANNIANUS.

Agreeably indeed to your usual concern for my interest, you advise me to consider the codicil * of Acilianus (who has appointed me one of his co-heirs) as void, because it is not confirmed by his will. That this is law, I am perfectly well aware; it is a point of jurisprudence to which even

* A codicil, by the ancient civil law, was a less solemn kind of will; in which it was not necessary to observe so strictly the ceremonies prescribed by the law for a will. But no legacy given by a codicil was valid unless confirmed by the will, which was esteemed its basis. This, however, by later emperors, was altered. Vid. Just. T. xxv l. 2. *M.*

those who are ignorant of every other are usually no strangers. But I have a private law of my own, and that is, punctually to perform the will of the deceased, though it may want the essential forms. This codicil, beyond all manner of doubt, is of Acilianus' own hand-writing: therefore, although not confirmed by his will, I shall be guided by it as strictly as if it were; especially as there is no danger that any villainous informer can take advantage of this mistake. If indeed there was any hazard that what I give to the legatees in the codicil would be seized as forfeited to the public use, I ought perhaps to act with more caution and deliberation: but since the heir may dispose of what accrues to him as such, in the way he thinks proper, nothing hinders, since the law does not, my observing that rule which I have laid down for myself. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* Gallus.

You are surprised that I am so fond of my Laurentine,* or (if you prefer the name) my Laurens: but you will cease to wonder when I acquaint you with the beauty of the villa, the advantages of its situation, and the extensive view of the sea-coast. It is only seventeen miles from Rome; so that when I have finished my business in town, I can pass my evenings here after a good satisfactory day's work. There are two different roads to it; if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone; if by Astia, at the eleventh. Both of them are sandy in places, which makes it a little heavier and

* His Laurentine villa, at Laurentum, in the neighbourhood of Astia. Pliny had no estate round this seat, his whole possessions here being included (as he informs us in book iv. letter vi.) in this house and gardens. It was merely a winter villa, in which he used to spend some of the cold months, whenever his business permitted of his absence from Rome; and, for this reason, it is that we find warmth such a consideration in the arrangement of the several apartments, &c. Several plans have been given of this villa. I may mention among others that of Mr. Castel in his Villas of the Ancients Illustrated. But the plans all differ as to the arrangement of the several parts of this building. Its ruins are said to have been discovered about the year 1714. *M.*

longer by carriage, but short and easy on horseback. The landscape affords plenty of variety, the view in some places being closed in by woods, in others extending over broad meadows, where numerous flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which the severity of the winter has driven from the mountains, fatten in the spring warmth, and on the rich pasturage. My villa is of a convenient size without being expensive to keep up. The court-yard in front is plain, but not mean, through which you enter porticoes shaped into the form of the letter D,* enclosing a small but cheerful area between. These make a capital retreat for bad weather, not only as they are shut in with windows, but particularly as they are sheltered by a projection of the roof. From the middle of these porticoes you pass into a bright pleasant inner court,† and out of that into a handsome hall ‡ running out towards the seashore; so that when there is a south-west breeze, it is gently washed with the waves, which spend themselves at its base. On every side of this hall there are either folding-doors or windows equally large, by which means you have a view from the front and the two sides of three different seas, as it were: from the back you see the middle court, the portico, and the area; and from another point you look through the portico into the courtyard, and out upon the woods and distant mountains beyond. On the left hand of this hall, a little farther from the sea, lies a large drawing-room, and beyond that, a second of a smaller size, which has one window to the rising and another to the setting sun: this as well has a view of the sea, but more distant and agreeable. The angle formed by the projection of the dining-room with this drawing-room retains and intensifies the warmth of the sun, and this forms our winter quarters and family gymnasium, which is sheltered from all the winds except those which bring on clouds, but the clear sky comes out again before the warmth has gone out of the

* Thus, ⊐+D, the space + between forming the area.

† *Cavaedium*, a large apartment roofed over, and in the centre of the roof an opening which was called *compluvium*. The sides of the roof sloped downwards towards this aperture, so that the rain-water, running down these, passed through the *compluvium* and fell into a cistern in the floor immediately underneath, called *impluvium*.

‡ *Triclinium*, dining-room.

place. Adjoining this angle is a room forming the segment of a circle, the windows of which are so arranged as to get the sun all through the day: in the walls are contrived a sort of cases, containing a collection of authors who can never be read too often. Next to this is a bedroom,* connected with it by a raised passage furnished with pipes, which supply, at a wholesome temperature, and distribute to all parts of this room, the heat they receive. The rest of this side of the house is appropriated to the use of my slaves and freedmen; but most of the rooms in it are respectable enough to put my guests into. In the opposite wing is a most elegant, tastefully fitted up bedroom; next to which lies another, which you may call either a large bedroom † or a modified dining-room; it is very warm and light, not only from the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea. Beyond this is a bedroom with an ante-room, the height of which renders it cool in summer, its thick walls warm in winter, for it is sheltered, every way, from the winds. To this apartment another ante-room is joined by one common wall. From thence you enter into the wide and spacious *cooling-room* ‡ belonging to the bath,§ from the opposite walls of which two curved basins are thrown out, so to speak; which are more than large enough if you consider that the sea is close at hand. Adjacent to this is the anointing-room, then the sweating-

* *Dormitorium membrum*, a night sleeping-room. The bedrooms were of two kinds, those used for sleeping in during the day, and those used at night: the latter were called *dormitoria*.

† A sleeping-room for use in the day-time.

‡ 'The principal use of this room seems to have been designed to prepare the bodies of those that had been in the former room for their going into the warmer air.' Castel's Villas.

§ 'In Pliny's time the Romans always bathed before the evening meal; the public baths, therefore, in the city were extremely numerous, in which, Vitruvius gives us to understand, there were, for each sex, three rooms for bathing, one of cold water, one of warm, and one still warmer; and there were cells of three degrees for sweating: to the fore-mentioned members were added others for anointing and bodily exercises. The last thing they did before entering the dining-room was to bathe; what preceded their washing was their exercise in the sphaeristerium, prior to which it was their custom to anoint themselves. As for their sweating-rooms, though they were, doubtless, in all the baths, we do not find them to have been used but upon particular occasions.' Castel's Villas.

room, and beyond that the bath-heating room:* adjoining are two other little bath-rooms, elegantly rather than sumptuously fitted up: annexed to them is a warm bath of wonderful construction, in which one can swim and take a view of the sea at the same time. Not far from this stands the tennis-court,† which lies open to the warmth of the afternoon sun. From thence you go up a sort of turret which has two rooms below, with the same number above, besides a dining-room commanding a very extensive look-out on to the sea, the coast, and the beautiful villas scattered along the shore line. At the other end is a second turret, containing a room that gets the rising and setting sun. Behind this is a large store-room and granary, and underneath, a spacious dining-room, where only the murmur and break of the sea can be heard, even in a storm: it looks out upon the garden, and the *gestatio* ‡ running round the garden. The *gestatio* is bordered round with box, and, where that is decayed, with rosemary: for the box, wherever sheltered by the buildings, grows plentifully, but where it lies open and exposed to the weather and spray from the sea, though at some distance from this latter, it quite withers up. Next the *gestatio*, and running along inside it, is a shady vine-plantation, the path of which is so soft and easy to the tread that you may walk bare-foot upon it. The garden is chiefly planted with fig and mulberry trees, to which this soil is as favourable as it is averse from all others. Here is a dining-room, which, though it stands away from the sea, enjoys the garden view which is just as pleasant: two apartments run round the back part of it, the windows of which look out upon the entrance of the villa, and into a fine kitchen-garden. From here extends an enclosed portico§ which, from its great length, you might take for a public one. It has a range of windows on either side, but more on the side facing the sea, and fewer on the garden side, and these, single windows

* *Propnigeon*, a passage communicating with the mouth of the furnace.

† *Sphaeristerium*. See note § on preceding page.

‡ See book i. letter iii. note.

§ 'These enclosed porticoes differed no otherwise from our present galleries than that they had pillars in them: the use of this room was for walking.' Castel's Villas.

and alternate with the opposite rows. In calm, clear, weather these are all thrown open; but if it blows, those on the weather side are closed, whilst those away from the wind can remain open without any inconvenience. Before this enclosed portico lies a terrace fragrant with the scent of violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which, while it retains the rays, keeps away the north-east wind; and it is as warm on this side as it is cool on the side opposite: in the same way it is a protection against the wind from the south-west; and thus, in short, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds, from whatever quarter they may blow. These are some of its winter advantages, they are still more appreciable in the summer time; for at that season it throws a shade upon the terrace during the whole of the forenoon, and upon the adjoining portion of the *gestatio* and garden in the afternoon, casting a greater or less shade on this side or on that as the day increases or decreases. But the portico itself is coolest just at the time when the sun is at its hottest, that is, when the rays fall directly upon the roof. Also, by opening the windows you let in the western breezes in a free current, which prevents the place getting oppressive with close and stagnant air. At the upper end of the terrace and portico stands a detached garden building, which I call my *favourite;* my *favourite* indeed, as I put it up myself. It contains a very warm winter-room, one side of which looks down upon the terrace, while the other has a view of the sea, and both lie exposed to the sun. The bed-room opens on to the covered portico by means of folding-doors, while its window looks out upon the sea. On that side next the sea, and facing the middle wall, is formed a very elegant little recess, which, by means of transparent* windows and a curtain drawn to or aside, can be made part of the adjoining room, or separated from it. It con-

* 'Windows made of a transparent stone called *lapis specularis* (mica), which was first found in Hispania Citerior, and afterwards in Cyprus, Cappadocia, Sicily, and Africa; but the best came from Spain and Cappadocia. It was easily split into the thinnest sheets. Windows made of this stone were called *specularia*.' Smith's Dictionary of Antiquities.

tains a couch and two chairs: as you lie upon this couch, from where your feet are you get a peep of the sea; looking behind you see the neighbouring villas, and from the head you have a view of the woods: these three views may be seen either separately,* from so many different windows, or blended together in one. Adjoining this is a bed-room, which neither the servants' voices, the murmuring of the sea, the glare of lightning, nor daylight itself, can penetrate, unless you open the windows. This profound tranquillity and seclusion are occasioned by a passage separating the wall of this room from that of the garden, and thus, by means of this intervening space, every noise is drowned. Annexed to this is a tiny stove-room, which, by opening or shutting a little aperture, lets out or retains the heat from underneath, according as you require. Beyond this lie a bed-room and ante-room, which enjoy the sun, though obliquely indeed, from the time it rises till the afternoon. When I retire to this garden summer-house, I fancy myself a hundred miles away from my villa, and take especial pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia,† when, by the licence of that festive season, every other part of my house resounds with my servants' mirth: thus I neither interrupt their amusement nor they my studies. Amongst the pleasures and conveniences of this situation, there is one drawback, and that is, the want of running water; but then there are wells about the place, or rather springs, for they lie close to the surface. And, altogether, the quality of this coast is remarkable; for dig where you may, you meet, upon the first turning up of the ground, with a spring of water, quite pure, not in the least salt, although so near the sea. The neighbouring woods supply us with all the fuel we require, the other necessaries Ostia furnishes. Indeed, to a moderate man, even the village

* 'It must have been from the middle of the room that he could see all these prospects separate and distinct, which, upon a nearer approach to any particular window, must have appeared intermingled.' Castel's Villas.

† A feast held in honour of the god Saturn, which began on the 19th of December, and continued, as some say, for seven days. It was a time of general rejoicing, particularly among the slaves, who had at this season the privilege of taking great liberties with their masters. *M*

(between which and my house there is only one villa) would supply all ordinary requirements. It has three public baths, which are a great convenience if it happen that friends come in unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time for preparing my own. The whole coast is very pleasantly sprinkled with villas either in rows or detached, which, whether looking at them from the sea or the shore, present the appearance of so many different cities. The strand is, sometimes, after a long calm, perfectly smooth, though, in general, through the storms driving the waves upon it, it is rough and uneven. I cannot boast that our sea is plentiful in choice fish; however, it supplies us with capital soles and prawns: but as to other kinds of provisions, my villa aspires to excel even inland countries, particularly in milk: for the cattle come up there from the meadows in large numbers, in pursuit of water and shade. Tell me, now, have I not good reason for living in, staying in, loving, such a retreat, which, if you feel no appetite for, you must be morbidly attached to town? And I only wish you would feel inclined to come down to it, that to so many charms with which my little villa abounds, it might have the very considerable addition of your company to recommend it. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Mauricus.

What pleasanter commission could you have entrusted me with than that of finding a tutor for your brother's children? Your kindness sends me back to school again: I resume, as it were, that most pleasing part of my life. I sit among the lads, as I used to, and have the additional pleasure of observing the respect they pay me from the reputation I have acquired by the same studies. Accordingly, I lately came in upon them while they were warmly declaiming before a good-sized audience of the same rank with myself; the moment I appeared they were silent. I mention this for their honour rather than my own, and to let you see the just hopes you may conceive of placing your nephews to their advantage at this school. I purpose

hearing all the several professors; and then writing you such an account of them as will enable you (so far as a letter can) to judge of their respective abilities. The conscientious and careful execution, of so important a commission especially, is due to our friendship and to your brother's memory. Nothing, certainly, is more to your concern than that his children (I would have said *yours*, but that I know you look upon them as it is with even more tenderness than your own) may be found worthy of such a father and such an uncle: and I should have claimed a share in that care, even though you had not required it of me. I am conscious that, in thus selecting a tutor, I shall draw upon me the displeasure of all the rest of that profession: but where the interest of your brother's children is concerned, I esteem it my duty to incur displeasure, or even enmities, with as much unconcern as parents do for their own children. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* CEREALIS.

You advise me to read my late speech before an assemblage of my friends. I shall do so, as you advise it, though I have strong scruples. Compositions of this sort lose, I well know, all their force and fire, and even their very name almost, by a mere recital. It is the solemnity of the tribunal, the concourse of advocates, the suspense of the event, the fame of the several pleaders concerned, the different parties formed amongst the audience; add to this the gestures, the pacing, aye the actual running, to and fro, of the speaker, the body working * in harmony with every inward emotion, that conspire to give a spirit and a grace to what he delivers. This is the reason that those who plead sitting, though they retain most of the advantages possessed by those who stand up to plead, weaken the whole force of their oratory. The eyes and hands of the

* Cicero and Quintilian have laid down rules how far, and in what instances, this liberty was allowable, and both agree it ought to be used with great sagacity and judgment. The latter of these excellent critics mentions a witticism of Flavius Virginius, who asked one of these orators, '*Quot millia passuum declamasset?*' How many *miles* he had declaimed. *M.*

reader, those important instruments of graceful elocution, being engaged, it is no wonder that the attention of the audience droops, without anything extrinsic to keep it up, no allurements of gesture to attract, no smart, stinging impromptus to enliven. To these general considerations I must add this particular disadvantage which attends the speech in question, that it is of the argumentative kind; and it is natural for an author to infer that what he wrote with labour will not be read with pleasure. For who is there so unprejudiced as not to prefer the attractive and sonorous to the sombre and unornamented in style? It is very unreasonable that there should be any distinction; however, it is certain the judges generally expect one style of pleading, and the audience another; whereas an auditor ought to be affected only by those parts which would especially strike him, were he in the place of the judge. Nevertheless it is possible the objections which lie against this piece may be surmounted in consideration of the novelty it has to recommend it: the novelty I mean with respect to us; for the Greek orators have a method of reasoning upon a different occasion, not altogether unlike that which I have employed. They, when they would throw out a law, as contrary to some former one unrepealed, argue by comparing those together; so I, on the contrary, endeavour to prove that the crime,* which I was insisting upon as falling within the intent and meaning of the law relating to public extortions, was agreeable, not only to that law, but likewise to other laws of the same nature. Those who are ignorant of the jurisprudence of their country can have no taste for reasonings of this kind, but those who are not ought to be proportionably the more favourable in the judgments they pass upon them. I shall endeavour, therefore, if you persist in my reciting it, to collect as learned an audience as I can. But before you determine this point, do weigh impartially the different considerations I have laid before you, and then decide as reason shall direct; for it is reason that must justify you; obedience to your commands will be a sufficient apology for me. Farewell.

* Some are of opinion that the speech alluded to in this letter is the same that Pliny delivered in the senate against M. Priscus. See letter xi. of this book. *M.*

LETTER XX. *To* CALVISIUS.

Give me a penny, and I will tell you a story 'worth gold,'* or, rather, you shall hear two or three; for one brings to my mind another. It makes no difference with which I begin. Verania, the widow of Piso, the Piso, I mean, whom Galba adopted, lay extremely ill, and Regulus paid her a visit. By the way, mark the assurance of the man, visiting a lady who detested him herself, and to whose husband he was a declared enemy! Even barely to enter her house would have been bad enough, but he actually went and seated himself by her bed-side and began enquiring on what day and hour she was born. Being informed of these important particulars, he composes his countenance, fixes his eyes, mutters something to himself, counts upon his fingers, and all this merely to keep the poor sick lady in suspense. When he had finished, 'You are,' he says, 'in one of your climacterics; however, you will get over it. But for your greater satisfaction, I will consult with a certain diviner, whose skill I have frequently experienced.' Accordingly off he goes, performs a sacrifice, and returns with the strongest assurances that the omens confirmed what he had promised on the part of the stars. Upon this the good woman, whose danger made her credulous, calls for her will and gives Regulus a legacy. She grew worse shortly after this; and in her last moments exclaimed against this wicked, treacherous, and worse than perjured wretch, who had sworn falsely to her by his own son's life.† But imprecations of this sort

* Alluding to the phrase of certain *charlatans*, who gained their livelihood by gathering a circle round them in the public places of Rome, and amusing the gaping multitude by popular traditionary tales, or wonderful stories of their own invention. *M.*

† It was customary among the ancients to swear by what they held most dear. To this custom Martial alludes:

'*Ecce negas jurasque mihi per templa tonantis;*
Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.'

TRANSLATION.

'Swear, though thou dost by Jove, thou wilt deceive;
Swear by Anchialus, I'll then believe.'

That is, swear by your boy Anchialus. *M.*

are as common with Regulus as they are impious; and he continually devotes that unhappy youth to the curses of those gods whose vengeance his own frauds every day provoke.

Velleius Blaesus, a man of consular rank, and remarkable for his immense wealth, in his last illness was anxious to make some alterations in his will. Regulus, who had lately endeavoured to insinuate himself into his good graces, hoped to get something from the new will, and accordingly addresses himself to his physicians, and conjures them to exert all their skill to prolong the poor man's life. But after the will was signed, he changes his character, reversing his tone: 'How long,' says he to these very same physicians, 'do you intend keeping this man in misery? Since you cannot preserve his life, why do you grudge him the happy release of death?' Blaesus dies, and, as if he had overheard every word that Regulus had said, has not left him one farthing.—And now have you had enough? or are you for the third, according to rhetorical canon? If so, Regulus will supply you. You must know, then, that Aurelia, a lady of remarkable accomplishments, purposing to execute her will,* had put on her smartest dress for the occasion. Regulus, who was present as a witness, turned to the lady, and, 'Pray,' says he, 'leave me these fine clothes.' Aurelia thought the man was joking: but he insisted upon it perfectly seriously, and, to be brief, obliged her to open her will, and insert the dress she had on as a legacy to him, watching her as she wrote, and then looking over it to see that it was all down correctly. Aurelia, however, is still alive: though Regulus, no doubt, when he solicited this bequest, expected to enjoy it pretty soon. The fellow gets estates, he gets legacies, conferred upon him, as if he really deserved them! But why should I go on dwelling upon this in a city where wickedness and knavery have, for this time past, received, the same, do I say, nay, even greater encouragement, than modesty and virtue? Regulus is a glaring instance of this truth, who, from a state of

* This was an act of great ceremony; and if Aurelia's dress was of the kind which some of the Roman ladies used, the legacy must have been considerable which Regulus had the impudence to ask. *M.*

poverty, has by a train of villainies acquired such immense riches that he once told me, upon consulting the omens to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces,* he found them so favourable as to portend he should possess double that sum. And possibly he may, if he continues to dictate wills for other people in this way: a sort of fraud, in my opinion, the most infamous of any. Farewell.

* About £468,700.

BOOK III.

LETTER I. *To* Calvisius.

I never, I think, spent any time more agreeably than my time lately with Spurinna. So agreeably, indeed, that if ever I should arrive at old age, there is no man whom I would sooner choose for my model, for nothing can be more perfect in arrangement than his mode of life. I look upon order in human actions, especially at that advanced age, with the same sort of pleasure as I behold the settled course of the heavenly bodies. In young men, indeed, a little confusion and disarrangement is all well enough: but in age, when business is unseasonable, and ambition indecent, all should be composed and uniform. This rule Spurinna observes with the most religious consistency. Even in those matters which one might call insignificant, were they not of every-day occurrence, he observes a certain periodical season and method. The early morning he passes on his couch; at eight he calls for his slippers, and walks three miles, exercising mind and body together. On his return, if he has any friends in the house with him, he gets upon some entertaining and interesting topic of conversation; if by himself, some book is read to him, sometimes when visitors are there even, if agreeable to the company. Then he has a rest, and after that either takes up a book or resumes his conversation in preference to reading. By-and-by he goes out for a drive in his carriage, either with his wife, a most admirable woman, or with some friend: a happiness which lately was mine.—How agreeable, how delightful it is getting a quiet time alone with him in this way! You could imagine you were listening to some worthy of ancient times! What deeds, what men you hear about, and with what noble precepts you are imbued! Yet all delivered with so modest an air that there is not the least appearance of dictating. When

he has gone about seven miles, he gets out of his chariot and walks a mile more, after which he returns home, and either takes a rest or goes back to his couch and writing. For he composes most elegant lyrics both in Greek and Latin. So wonderfully soft, sweet, and gay they are, while the author's own unsullied life lends them additional charm. When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and in summer about two, he undresses himself and, if there happen to be no wind, walks for some time in the sun.* After this he has a good brisk game of tennis: for by this sort of exercise too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself upon his couch, but waits a little before he begins eating,† and in the meanwhile has some light and entertaining author read to him. In this, as in all the rest, his friends are at full liberty to share; or to employ themselves in any other way, just as they prefer. You sit down to an elegant dinner, without extravagant display, which is served up in antique plate of pure silver. He has another complete service in Corinthian metal,‡ which, though he admires as a curiosity, is far from being his passion. During dinner he is frequently entertained with the recital of some dramatic piece, by way of seasoning his very pleasures with study; and although he continues at the table, even in summer, till the night is somewhat advanced, yet he prolongs the entertainment with so much affability and politeness that none of his guests ever finds

* See book vi. letter xvi. note.

† This meal was the principal one among the Romans, at which all their feasts and invitations were made; they usually began it at their ninth hour, answering pretty nearly to our three o'clock in the afternoon. But as Spurinna, we find, did not enter upon the exercises which always preceded this meal till the eighth or ninth hour, if we allow about three hours for that purpose, he could not sit down to table till toward six or seven o'clock. *M.*

‡ This metal, whatever it was composed of (a point by no means clear), was so highly esteemed among the ancients that they preferred it even to gold:

. . . . '*Aeraque ab Isthmiacis auro potiora favillis.*'
Stat. Sylv. ii.

TRANSLATION.

. . . 'Corinthian brass more precious far than gold.'
M.

it tedious. By this method of living he has preserved all his senses entire, and his body vigorous and active to his seventy-eighth year, without showing any sign of old age except wisdom. This is the sort of life I ardently aspire after; as I purpose enjoying it when I shall arrive at those years which will justify a retreat from active life. Meanwhile I am embarrassed with a thousand affairs, in which Spurinna is at once my support and my example: for he too, so long as it became him, discharged his professional duties, held magistracies, governed provinces, and by toiling hard earned the repose he now enjoys. I propose to myself the same career and the same limits: and I here give it to you under my hand that I do so. If an ill-timed ambition should carry me beyond those bounds, produce this very letter of mine in court against me; and condemn me to repose, whenever I can enjoy it without being reproached with indolence. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Maximus.

I think I may claim a right to ask the same services of you for my friends as I would offer to yours had I the same opportunities. Arrianus Maturius occupies the highest social position among the Altinates. When I say this, I am not speaking with respect to his means (which are very considerable), but in allusion to his purity, integrity, dignity, and wisdom His counsel guides me in my affairs, and his judgment directs me in my studies; for truth, honour, and knowledge, are the distinguishing traits in his character. He loves me (and I cannot express myself more strongly) as well as you love me. He is without ambition and therefore contented with remaining in the equestrian order, when he might easily have advanced himself into a higher rank. However it is my duty to endeavour that his merit be rewarded as it deserves, and I desire very much, without his either knowing or expecting such a thing, and probably too not wishing it, to contribute something to his honours. I want to obtain for him some dignified but not troublesome post, and I beg, when anything of that kind offers, you would think of him; it

will be an obligation which both he and I shall ever remember with the greatest gratitude. For although he does not seek anything of this kind, yet he will receive it as gratefully as if he had desired it. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* HISPULLA.

It is not easy to determine whether my love or esteem were greater, for that wise and excellent man your father, while from the respect I bear to his memory and your virtues, you are exceedingly dear to me. Can I fail then to wish (as I shall, by every means in my power, endeavour) that your son may resemble his grandfather? Myself, I should prefer his being like his grandfather on the mother's side, though the one on the father's as well was a man of mark and worth, his father and his uncle too will furnish him with illustrious examples. Now the surest way of training him up in the steps of such men is to give him a good, sound, liberal education, and it is of the utmost importance from whom he receives this. Hitherto, owing to his early years, he has been brought up under your eye, and in your house, where he is exposed to few, I should rather say to no, wrong impressions. But he is now of an age to be sent from home, and it is time to place him with some professor of rhetoric; of whose discipline and method, modesty, but, above all, purity and uprightness, you may be well satisfied. Amonst the many advantages for which our young man is indebted to nature and fortune, he has that of a most beautiful person: it is necessary therefore, in this loose and slippery age, to find out one who will not only be his tutor, but guardian and governor as well. I will venture to recommend Julius Genitor to you under that character. I am fond of him, it is true: but my affection by no means prejudices my judgment; on the contrary, it is, actually, the effect of it. His behaviour is grave, and his morals are irreproachable; perhaps somewhat too severe and rigid for the libertine manners of these times. His professional qualifications you may learn from many others, for the gift of eloquence, as it is open to all the world, is soon perceived: but the

qualities of the heart lie in deeper recesses, more out of the reach of common observation; and it is on *that* side I undertake to answer for my friend. Your son will hear nothing from this worthy man but what will be to his advantage to know, nor will he learn anything of which it would be better he were ignorant. He will remind him as often, and with as much zeal as you or I should, of the virtues of his ancestors, and what a glorious weight of illustrious characters he has to support. You will not hesitate then to place him with a tutor whose first care will be to form his morals and after that to instruct him in eloquence; an attainment ill acquired if to the neglect of his moral culture. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* Macrinus.

Although my friends here, as well as the town in general, seem to approve of my conduct in the affair I am going to mention, yet it is very material to me what you think; and as I wished for your advice before engaging in it, so I want exceedingly to know your opinion now it is finished. Having obtained leave of absence from my office as treasurer, I went at once into Tuscany to look after some works which I am carrying on there for the benefit of that province, at my own expense. In the interval, deputies on the part of the Baetici arrived, with complaints against the government of Caecilius Classicus, and applied to the senate for me to act as their counsel. My colleagues in the treasury, my best and most affectionate friends, represented, on my behalf, the necessary engagements of our common department, and endeavoured to excuse and get me off the business. Upon this the senate passed a decree reflecting great honour upon me: to the effect that I should be counsel for the province, provided the deputies could obtain my consent. On my return they were again introduced into the senate, and there renewed their petition in my presence, imploring my generous assistance, which they had experienced against Massa Baebius, and alleging their right of patronage. This received that very evident approval of the

senate which is the usual forerunner of their decrees. Whereupon I rose and addressed myself to the house as follows, 'Conscript Fathers, I no longer think that I offered any just reasons for excusing myself:' and they were pleased with the modesty and manner of my answer. It was not only the sense of the general feeling of the house which urged me to this resolution, though this principally, but many other, though less important, considerations. I reflected that our ancestors thought themselves obliged to engage voluntarily in defence of those particular persons with whom they were united by the laws of hospitality, and that therefore it would be highly ungenerous in me to abandon a collective body to which I stood in the same relation. Besides, I recollected the danger even I had encountered, in the last cause I undertook for these very same Baetici, and felt that I ought not to lose what I had earned by my former services. For so it is, that you cancel all your earlier kindnesses by not adding fresh ones to them, and though you oblige people ever so often, yet once deny them anything, they only remember that single denial. I considered likewise that, Classicus being dead, the most serious objection usually, that of exposing a senator, was removed; and that in undertaking this defence, I should earn the same thanks as if he were alive, without incurring anybody's ill-will. In a word, I thought if I obliged them, now for this third time, I could excuse myself the more easily on some future occasion, should they happen to accuse any person against whom I ought not to appear. For all our offices have their limits; and the best way of reserving to ourselves the liberty of refusing where we would is to comply where we can. Thus you have heard the motions which influenced me in this affair: it now remains that you give me your opinion, one way or the other, in doing which the honest freedom of your dissent will please me just as well as the sanction of your approval. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Baebius Macer.

It gives me great pleasure to find you such a reader of my uncle's works as to wish to have a complete collection

of them, and to ask me for the names of them all. I will act as index then, and you shall know the very order in which they were written, for the studious reader likes to know this. The first work of his was a treatise in one volume, 'On the Use of the Dart by Cavalry;' this he wrote when in command of one of the cavalry corps of our allied troops, and is drawn up with great care and ingenuity. 'The Life of Pomponius Secundus,'* in two volumes. Pomponius had a great affection for him, and he thought he owed this tribute to his memory. 'The History of the Wars in Germany,' in twenty books, in which he gave an account of all the battles we were engaged in against that nation. A dream he had while serving in the army in Germany first suggested the design of this work to him. He imagined that Drusus Nero† (who extended his conquests very far into that country, and there lost his life) appeared to him in his sleep, and entreated him to rescue his memory from oblivion. Next comes a work entitled 'The Student,' in three parts, which from their length spread into six volumes: a work in which is discussed the earliest training and subsequent education of the orator. 'Questions of Grammar and Style,' in eight books, written in the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in literary pursuits requiring freedom and elevation of tone. He has completed the history which Aufidius Bassus‡ left unfinished, and has added to it thirty books. And lastly he has left thirty-seven books on *Natural History*, a work of great compass and learning, and as full of variety as nature herself. You will wonder how a man as busy as he was could find time to compose so many books, and some of them too involving such care and labour. But you will

* A poet to whom Quintilian assigns the highest rank, as a writer of tragedies, among his contemporaries (book x. c. i. 98). Tacitus also speaks of him in terms of high appreciation (Annals, v. 8).

† Stepson of Augustus and brother to Tiberius. An amiable and popular prince. He died at the close of his third campaign, from a fracture received by falling from his horse.

‡ A historian under Augustus and Tiberius. He wrote part of a history of Rome, which was continued by the elder Pliny; also an account of the German war, to which Quintilian makes allusion (Inst. x. 103), pronouncing him, as a historian, 'estimable in all respects, yet in some things failing to do himself justice.'

be still more surprised when you hear that he pleaded at the bar for some time, that he died in his sixty-sixth year, that the intervening time was employed partly in the execution of the highest official duties, partly in attendance upon those emperors who honoured him with their friendship. But he had a quick apprehension, marvellous power of application, and was of an exceedingly wakeful temperament. He always began to study at midnight at the time of the feast of Vulcan, not for the sake of good luck, but for learning's sake; in winter generally at one in the morning, but never later than two, and often at twelve.* He was a most ready sleeper, insomuch that he would sometimes, whilst in the midst of his studies, fall off and then wake up again. Before day-break he used to wait upon Vespasian (who also used his nights for transacting business in),† and then proceed to execute the orders he had received. As soon as he returned home, he gave what time was left to study. After a short and light refreshment at noon (agreeably to the good old custom of our ancestors) he would frequently in the summer, if he was disengaged from business, lie down and bask in the sun; during which time some author was read to him, while he took notes and made extracts, for every book he read he made extracts out of, indeed it was a maxim of his, that 'no book was so bad but some good might be got out of it.' When this was over, he generally took a cold bath, then

* The distribution of time among the Romans was very different from ours. They divided the night into four equal parts, which they called *watches*, each three hours in length; and part of these they devoted either to the pleasures of the table or to study. The natural day they divided into twelve hours, the first beginning with sun-rise, and the last ending with sun-set; by which means their hours were of unequal length, varying according to the different seasons of the year. The time for business began with sun-rise, and continued to the fifth hour, being that of dinner, which with them was only a slight repast. From thence to the seventh hour was a time of repose; a custom which still prevails in Italy. The eighth hour was employed in bodily exercises; after which they constantly bathed, and from thence went to supper. *M.*

† Suetonius, in his life of the emperor Vespasian, informs us that 'after he became emperor, he always got up very early, and before daybreak. As soon as he had read over his letters and all the official briefs, he allowed in his friends.' (Vespasian. c. xxi.)

some slight refreshment and a little nap. After this, as if it had been a new day, he studied till supper-time, when a book was again read to him, which he would take down running notes upon. I remember once his reader having mis-pronounced a word, one of my uncle's friends at the table made him go back to where the word was and repeat it again; upon which my uncle said to his friend, 'Surely you understood it?' Upon his acknowledging that he did, 'Why then,' said he, 'did you make him go back again? We have lost more than ten lines by this interruption.' Such an economist he was of time! In the summer he used to rise from supper at daylight, and in winter as soon as it was dark: a rule he observed as strictly as if it had been a law of the state. Such was his manner of life amid the bustle and turmoil of the town: but in the country his whole time was devoted to study, excepting only when he bathed. In this exception I include no more than the time during which he was actually in the bath; for all the while he was being rubbed and wiped, he was employed either in hearing some book read to him or in dictating himself. In going about anywhere, as though he were disengaged from all other business, he applied his mind wholly to that single pursuit. A short-hand * writer constantly attended him, with book and tablets, who, in the winter, wore a particular sort of warm gloves, that the sharpness of the weather might not occasion any interruption to my uncle's studies: and for the same reason, when in Rome, he was always carried in a chair. I recollect his once taking me to task for walking. 'You need not,' he said, 'lose these hours.' For he thought every hour gone that was not given to study. Through this extraordinary application he found time to compose the several treatises I have mentioned, besides one hundred

* The Romans carried the art of short-hand to its highest perfection, as appears from the following epigram:

Currant verba licet, manus est velocius illis;
Nondum lingua suum, dextia peregit opus.'

Mart. xiv. 208.

TRANSLATION.

Swift though the words, (the pen still swifter sped)
The hand has finish'd, ere the tongue has said.'

M.

and sixty volumes of extracts which he left me in his will, consisting of a kind of common-place, written on both sides, in very small hand, so that one might fairly reckon the number considerably more. He used himself to tell us that when he was comptroller of the revenue in Spain, he could have sold these manuscripts to Largius Licinus for four hundred thousand sesterces,* and then there were not so many of them. When you consider the books he has read, and the volumes he has written, are you not inclined to suspect that he never was engaged in public duties or was ever in the confidence of his prince? On the other hand, when you are told how indefatigable he was in his studies, are you not inclined to wonder that he read and wrote no more than he did? For, on one side, what obstacles would not the business of a court throw in his way? and on the other, what is it that such intense application might not effect? It amuses me then when I hear myself called a studious man, who in comparison with him am the merest idler. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits by numberless affairs both public and private? Who amongst those whose whole lives are devoted to literary pursuits would not blush and feel himself the most confirmed of sluggards by the side of him? I see I have run out my letter farther than I had originally intended, which was only to let you know, as you asked me, what works he had left behind him. But I trust this will be no less acceptable to you than the books themselves, as it may, possibly, not only excite your curiosity to read his works, but also your emulation to copy his example, by some attempts of a similar nature. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* ANNIUS SEVERUS.

I have lately purchased with a legacy that was left me a small statue of Corinthian brass. It is small indeed, but elegant and life-like, as far as I can form any judgment, which most certainly in matters of this sort, as perhaps in all others, is extremely defective. However, I do see the beauties of this figure: for, as it is naked the faults, if

* About £3100.

there be any, as well as the perfections, are the more observable. It represents an old man, in an erect attitude. The bones, muscles, veins, and the very wrinkles, give the impression of breathing life. The hair is thin and failing, the forehead broad, the face shrivelled, the throat lank, the arms loose and hanging, the breast shrunken, and the belly fallen in, as the whole turn and air of the figure behind too is equally expressive of old age. It appears to be true antique, judging from the colour of the brass. In short, it is such a masterpiece as would strike the eye of a connoisseur, and which cannot fail to charm an ordinary observer: and this induced me, who am an absolute novice in this art, to buy it. But I did so, not with any intention of placing it in my own house (for I have nothing of the kind there), but with a design of fixing it in some conspicuous place in my native province; I should like it best in the temple of Jupiter, for it is a gift well worthy of a temple, well worthy of a god. I desire therefore you would, with that care with which you always perform my requests, undertake this commission and give immediate orders for a pedestal to be made for it, out of what marble you please, but let my name be engraved upon it, and, if you think proper to add these as well, my titles. I will send the statue by the first person I can find who will not mind the trouble of it; or possibly (which I am sure you will like better) I may myself bring it along with me: for I intend, if business can spare me that is to say, to make an excursion over to you. I see joy in your looks when I promise to come; but you will soon change your countenance when I add, only for a few days: for the same business that at present keeps me here will prevent my making a longer stay. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* Caninius Rufus.

I have just been informed that Silius Italicus* has starved himself to death, at his villa near Naples. Ill-

* Born about A.D. 25. He acquired some distinction as an advocate. The only poem of his which has come down to us is a heavy, prosaic performance in seventeen books, entitled 'Punica,' and containing an

health was the cause. Being troubled with an incurable cancerous humour, he grew weary of life and therefore put an end to it with a determination not to be moved. He had been extremely fortunate all through his life with the exception of the death of the younger of his two sons; however, he has left behind him the elder and the worthier man of the two in a position of distinction, having even attained consular rank. His reputation had suffered a little in Nero's time, as he was suspected of having officiously joined in some of the informations in that reign; but he used his interest with Vitellius, with great discretion and humanity. He acquired considerable honour by his administration of the government of Asia, and, by his good conduct after his retirement from business, cleared his character from that stain which his former public exertions had thrown upon it. He lived as a private nobleman, without power, and consequently without envy. Though he was frequently confined to his bed, and always to his room, yet he was highly respected, and much visited; not with an interested view, but on his own account. He employed his time between conversing with literary men and composing verses; which he sometimes read out, by way of testing the public opinion: but they evidence more industry than genius. In the decline of his years he entirely quitted Rome, and lived altogether in Campania, from whence even the accession of the new emperor* could not draw him. A circumstance which I mention as much to the honour of Caesar, who was not displeased with that liberty, as of Italicus, who was not afraid to make use of it. He was reproached with indulging his taste for the fine arts at an immoderate expense. He had several villas in the same province, and the last purchase was always the especial favourite, to the neglect of all the rest. These residences overflowed with books, statues, and pictures, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored; particularly that of Virgil, of whom he was so passionate an admirer that he celebrated the anniversary of that poet's birthday

account of the events of the Second Punic War, from the capture of Saguntum to the triumph of Scipio Africanus. See Smith's Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Biog.

* Trajan.

with more solemnity than his own, at Naples especially where he used to approach his tomb * as if it had been a temple. In this tranquillity he passed his seventy-fifth year, with a delicate rather than an infirm constitution. As he was the last person upon whom Nero conferred the consular office, so he was the last survivor of all those who had been raised by him to that dignity. It is also remarkable that, as he was the last to die of Nero's consuls, so Nero died when he was consul. Recollecting this, a feeling of pity for the transitory condition of mankind comes over me. Is there anything in nature so short and limited as human life, even at its longest? Does it not seem to you but yesterday that Nero was alive? And yet not one of all those who were consuls in his reign now remains! Though why should I wonder at this? Lucius Piso (the father of that Piso who was so infamously assassinated by Valerius Festus in Africa) used to say, he did not see one person in the senate † whose opinion he had consulted when he was consul: in so short a space is the very term of life of such a multitude of beings comprised! so that to me those royal tears seem not only worthy of pardon but of praise. For it is said that Xerxes, on surveying his immense army, wept at the reflection that so many thousand lives would in such a short space of time be extinct. The more ardent therefore should be our zeal to lengthen out this frail and transient portion of existence, if not by our deeds (for the opportunities of this are not in our power) yet certainly by our literary accomplishments; and since long life is denied us, let us transmit to posterity some memorial that we have at least LIVED. I well know you need no incitements, but the warmth of my affection for you inclines me to urge you on in the course you are already pursuing, just as you have so often urged me. 'Happy rivalry' ‡ when two friends strive in this way which of them shall animate the other most in their mutual pursuit of immortal fame. Farewell.

* Travellers are still shown a monument near Naples, which is called Virgil's tomb. *M.*

† The number of senators, as regulated by Augustus, was 600. *M.*

‡ A quotation from Hesiod, Works and Days, v. 24.

LETTER VIII. *To* SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS.

The obliging way in which you request me to confer the military tribunate * upon your relation, which I had obtained of the most illustrious † Neratius Marcellus for yourself, is consistent with that respect with which you always treat me. As it would have given me great pleasure to have seen you in that post, so it will not be less acceptable to me to see another there through your means. For it would hardly, I think, be consistent to wish the advancement of a friend's honours and yet envy him the noblest of all distinctions, that of a generous and affectionate relation. To deserve preferment and to bestow it is glorious, and the praise of both will be yours if you resign to another what is your own due. In this glory I too shall share, when the world shall learn from the present instance that my friends can not only fill tribuneships but confer them as well. I readily therefore comply with your generous request; and as your name is not yet entered upon the roll, I can without difficulty insert that of Silvanus in its stead. May he accept this good office at your hands in as grateful a spirit as I am sure you will receive it at mine. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* CORNELIUS MINUCIANUS.

I am now at leisure to inform you of the great fatigue I underwent in defence of the province of Baetica; a case full of issues, and which took up several days for the various pleadings. Caecilius Classicus, a man of base, abandoned character, had carried on his proconsular government of the province of Baetica with equal violence and oppression, in the same year that Marius Priscus conducted a similar administration in Africa. Priscus, by the way, was a native of Baetica, as Classicus was of Africa, whence that not infelicitous saying current among

* See book iv. letter iv. note.

† This was a title given to all senators in the times of the latter emperors. *M.*

the Baetici (for even pain sometimes has its joke), 'I have got as good as I gave.' They differed in that Marius was prosecuted on the part of a single city, and several private persons; whereas the charge against Classicus was brought in the name of the united province of Baetica. He escaped, however, the consequences of the impeachment, either by an accidental or voluntary death, for his end was dishonourable enough, though the nature of it was uncertain; for, reasonable as it is to suppose that he would court death on finding his case hopeless, yet it is surprising that a man who was not ashamed to commit the basest crimes should yet have evaded the shame of a public conviction by putting an end to himself. Nevertheless the Baetici persisted in the prosecution. There has been legal provision made for a case of this sort, though the law had fallen into disuse, and was now, after a long intermission, restored. The Baetici brought a further accusation, viz. against the accomplices and ministers of Classicus, and demanded a particular enquiry into the conduct of each of these persons, by name. I was counsel for the province, along with Lucceius Albinus, a fluent and elegant speaker; and although we always had a preference for each other, yet being associated with him in this case has considerably heightened my affection. There is something in the pursuit of fame, especially of the oratorical kind, that is unsociable, but there was no rivalry, no contention between *us;* we worked together, neither of us thinking of himself but of the case in hand, which we thought far too weighty and important to be dealt with in a single speech, apprehending we should have neither time, voice, nor lungs sufficient to make good our case if we bound up so many charges and defendants together in one bundle, so to speak; besides that such a multitude of names and causes would be apt to confuse, not to say weary, the attention of the judges. Moreover, in that collective way of proceeding, either the interest of some might prove a protection to all the rest or, the more inconsiderable of the party being sacrificed, those of a more conspicuous rank might escape at their expense, for partiality and interest never exert themselves more successfully than when concealed under the specious

show of severity. We remembered the instance of Sertorius, who directed the strongest and the weakest soldier each to pull off the horse's tail—you know the rest of the story.* In the same manner we thought the only way of coping with such a numerous body of criminals was by attacking them singly. Our first and principal point was to prove Classicus guilty, which would prepare the way to his accomplices; for until that was done no charge could be fixed upon the latter. Amongst these we at once singled out Baebius Probus and Fabius Hispanus, to arraign immediately after Classicus: both these persons being considerable by their interest, and Hispanus in particular by his eloquence. As to Classicus, our work there was short and easy enough, for there was found amongst his papers an account in his own handwriting of the several sums he had taken, and upon what particular occasions. A bragging, boasting, letter was also produced which he had sent off to a certain mistress of his at Rome, in which were these words, 'Hurrah! hurrah! I am coming back to you a free man. I have now got in four millions of sesterces,† having sold up half the people of Baetica.' But it cost us a good deal of time and pains to make good the articles against Hispanus and Probus. Before entering upon the particular accusations alleged against these, I thought it necessary to prove that to be agents and ministers of a governor in matters manifestly unjust was in itself criminal. For they did not attempt

* The story, as related by Valerius Maximus, is to the following effect: Sertorius, being proscribed by Sulla, put himself at the head of the Lusitani. These people, upon a certain occasion, were for attacking, at once, the whole Roman army, greatly superior to them in numbers. Sertorius endeavoured to dissuade them, by all the arguments in his power, from so rash an undertaking: but finding his oratory prevailed nothing, he ordered two horses to be brought out before him, and calling a young lusty soldier, and worn-out veteran, he directed the former to pull off the horse's tail at once, and the other by degrees. The consequence was, the young man exerted all his strength in vain, while the old fellow performed his task. Thus, says that author, these rude, ungovernable people, who were running headlong to their destruction, were convinced, by this visible representation, of the justness of that advice, which had no influence upon them in the way of reasoning. (Val. Max. l. vii. c. 6.) *M.*

† About £31,250.

to deny the fact, but sued for pardon on the plea of necessity, in that as provincials they were compelled at their peril to obey all the proconsular orders. Claudius Restitutus, who was their counsel, has often said since that he never was more perplexed and disconcerted than when he perceived I had anticipated and seized this post, in which he had placed all his strength and confidence; though no man is more expert and vigilant in his profession, or more prepared against any surprise, however sudden. This was the issue then of our procedure. The senate decreed that such property as Classicus possessed before he went to his government should be separated from the remainder and given to his daughter, while the overplus should be divided among the unhappy sufferers. The decree added further that his creditors should refund whatever sums they had received since his return. Hispanus and Probus were sentenced to five years' banishment: so atrocious did that conduct now appear, about which there was a doubt at first as to whether it were criminal or not. A few days afterwards we proceeded against Claudius Fuscus, son-in-law to Classicus, and Stilonius Priscus, who commanded a regiment under him; but the respective events were different: for Priscus was banished to Italy for two years, while Fuscus was acquitted. At the third hearing, we thought it expedient to join several accomplices in one general charge, lest, by protracting this affair any longer, even the judicial justice and rigour itself would be quite worn out by sheer weariness and satiety. We had indeed designedly reserved the most inconsiderable of the persons concerned, to this day, the wife of Classicus excepted, against whom, although there was strong suspicion, the proofs seemed by no means sufficiently clear: as to his daughter, who was likewise in the number of the accused, there was not the least ground for any charge against her. When therefore in the close of the proceedings, I came to her name, I thought it would ill become me to bear hard upon one who appeared to be innocent; and therefore spoke very fully and freely in her vindication (for as this impeachment was now drawing to its conclusion, there was no danger that this last circumstance would diminish the weight of the

entire accusation, as it might have done at the outset of the case). I asked the deputies if they would tell me whether they had anything to allege against her, which they thought they could prove; and appealed to the senate, whether it was of opinion that I ought to use my eloquence, such as it was, like a weapon, against the throat of an innocent person, and I concluded thus, 'But I may be asked, perhaps, if I take upon myself to act as a judge? By no means: I recollect however that I am an advocate chosen out from amidst that venerable body.'

Thus ended this prosecution, in which so many parties were involved, some of whom were acquitted, but the greater number condemned, either to perpetual banishment, or for a limited time. The senate were pleased in the same decree to honour us with a most ample testimony of our diligence, fidelity, and resolute perseverance, in the conduct of this important business: a suitable and indeed the only adequate compensation for such a degree of exertion. You will readily conceive the fatigue we underwent in speaking and debating so long and so often, and in examining, assisting, and confuting such a number of witnesses; as well as what a difficult and disagreeable task we had to deny the private solicitations and withstand the public opposition of the friends of the several accused. To mention just one of my answers upon the occasion. When one of the judges themselves could not forbear interrupting me on behalf of a defendant whom he particularly favoured; 'When I have said all I meant to say,' I replied, 'he will still be as innocent as he was before.' From this you will conjecture what a scene of contention I went through, and what enemies I brought upon myself, for a little while at least. For an honest discharge of one's duty may, for the time, offend those it opposes, yet it will at last be justified and admired even by them.

Thus have I laid before you, in the clearest way I am able, this whole transaction. You will say, 'It was not so very important as all that: what do I want with such a long letter?' Do not keep asking me then what is going on at Rome; and remember too, that, considering the time this trial took up, the great number of persons concerned, and

the several proceedings against them, my letter is not at all a long one: and I really think I have related the whole with as much brevity as exactness. But now I must recall that last word, for I find, a little too late indeed, that I have left out a point, which I will mention here, though a little out of its place. Homer does this, and several others have followed his example; besides an irregularity of this kind has a certain grace and fitness of its own, though that is not my reason for adopting it. One of the witnesses, whether out of resentment at being summoned against his will, or that he was suborned by any of the defendants to weaken the credit of the charge, laid an accusation against Norbanus Licinianus, one of the deputies, and a collector of evidence for the present prosecution, alleging that he had prevaricated* in his charge against Casta, the wife of Classicus. The laws direct that the party accused shall be first proceeded against, before any information be received to the prejudice of the accuser, because, of course, how far the information is to be credited will best appear from the way in which the original case is conducted. But so extremely odious was Norbanus that neither the authority of the laws, the title of deputy, nor his office as solicitor, could protect him. He was a man of infamous character, who, like many others, had used his interest with Domitian to very flagitious ends. He was elected by the province one of the enquiry commissioners on this trial, not because of his worth and integrity, but as being a declared enemy to Classicus. He had been banished by him. Norbanus asked for time to be allowed him for his defence, and a copy of the articles of his accusation. Both were refused him, and he was ordered to answer immediately to the charge. He did so; and when I consider the wickedness and depravity of the man, I hardly know whether to say, with great audacity or great spirit, but, unquestionably, without the smallest embarrassment. There were many things alleged against him, far more to his disadvantage than the charge of prevarication. Pomponius Rufus and Libo Frugi, persons of consular rank, deposed

* A prevaricator is defined to be one that betrays the cause to the adversary, and turns on the criminal's side, whom he ought to prosecute. *M.*

against him that he was counsel, in Domitian's reign, for those infamous wretches who had informed against Salvius Liberalis. In short, Norbanus was condemned and banished. When therefore I came to speak against Casta, I insisted upon the fact that her accuser had been convicted of prevarication. But I urged this to very little purpose; for by a very unprecedented and indeed contradictory way of proceeding, the accuser being condemned the accused person was acquitted. You will be curious to know what course we took while all this business was being got through. We acquainted the senate that, as we had received all our information from Norbanus, we could not, if he should be convicted of collusion with this woman, proceed without new instructions. After this, all through his trial, we sat down, without interposing. Norbanus, after his conviction, continued present every day throughout the remainder of the proceedings, and preserved the same firmness, or audacity, of demeanour, to the end. I ask myself whether I have again left out anything, and I find I have almost left out something, again. On the last day of the trial, Salvius Liberalis inveighed strongly against the rest of the deputies for not having brought to justice all the parties they had received directions from the province to prosecute. As he is a man of considerable warmth of temper and eloquence, they were really in some danger. But I took those worthy persons under my protection, and they are so grateful as to acknowledge I saved them from the storm with which they were threatened. And now, my friend, I will put an end to my letter, *really* an end to it; and will not add one syllable more, even though I should find there was something still I had left out. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* SPURINNA *and* COTTIA.*

I did not tell you, when I paid you my last visit, that I had composed something in praise of your son; because, in the first place, I wrote it not for the sake of talking about my performance, but simply to satisfy my affection, to console my sorrow for the loss of him. Again, as you

* Spurinna's wife.

told me, my dear Spurinna, that you had heard I had been reciting a piece of mine, I imagined you had also heard at the same time what was the subject of the recital, and besides I was afraid of casting a gloom over your cheerfulness in that festive season, by reviving the remembrance of that heavy sorrow. And even now I have hesitated a little whether I should gratify you both, in your joint request, by sending only what I recited, or add to it what I am thinking of keeping back for another essay. It does not satisfy my feelings to devote only one little tract to a memory so dear and sacred to me, and it seemed also more to the interest of his fame to have it thus disseminated by separate pieces. But the consideration, that it will be more open and friendly to send you the whole now, rather than keep back some of it to another time, has determined me to do the former, especially as I have your promise that it shall not be communicated by either of you to anyone else, until I shall think proper to publish it. The only remaining favour I ask is, that you will give me a proof of the same unreserve by pointing out to me what you shall judge would be best altered, omitted, or added. It is difficult for a mind in affliction to concentrate itself upon such little cares. However, as you would direct a painter or sculptor who was representing the figure of your son what parts he should retouch or express, so I hope you will guide and inform my hand in this more durable or (as you are pleased to think it) this immortal likeness which I am endeavouring to execute: for the truer to the original, the more perfect and finished it is, so much the more lasting it is likely to prove. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* Julius Genitor.

It is just like the generous disposition of Artemidorus to magnify the kindnesses of his friends; hence he praises my deserts (though he is really indebted to me) beyond their due. It is true indeed that when the philosophers were expelled Rome,* I visited him at his house near the

* Domitian banished the philosophers not only from Rome, but Italy, as Suetonius (Dom. c. x.) and Aulus Gellius (Noct. Att. b. xv. cxi. 3, 4, 5) inform us: among these was the celebrated Epictetus. *M.*

city, and ran the greater risk in paying him that civility, as it was more noticeable then, I being praetor at the time. I supplied him too with a considerable sum to pay certain debts he had contracted upon very honourable occasions, without charging interest, though obliged to borrow the money myself, while the rest of his rich powerful friends stood by hesitating about giving him assistance. I did this at a time when seven of my friends were either executed or banished; Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidius having just been put to death, while Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fannia, were sent into exile; and scorched as it were by so many lightning-bolts of the state thus hurled and flashing round me, I augured by no uncertain tokens my own impending doom. But I do not look upon myself, on that account, as deserving of the high praises my friend bestows upon me: all I pretend to is the being clear of the infamous guilt of abandoning him in his misfortunes. I had, as far as the differences between our ages would admit, a friendship for his father-in-law Musonius, whom I both loved and esteemed, while Artemidorus himself I entered into the closest intimacy with when I was serving as a military tribune in Syria. And I consider as a proof that there is some good in me the fact of my being so early capable of appreciating a man who is either a philosopher or the nearest resemblance to one possible; for I am sure that, amongst all those who at the present day call themselves philosophers, you will find hardly any one of them so full of sincerity and truth as he. I forbear to mention how patient he is of heat and cold alike, how indefatigable in labour, how abstemious in his food, and what an absolute restraint he puts upon all his appetites; for these qualities, considerable as they would certainly be in any other character, are less noticeable by the side of the rest of those virtues of his which recommended him to Musonius for a son-in-law, in preference to so many others of all ranks who paid their addresses to his daughter. And when I think of all these things, I cannot help feeling pleasurably affected by those unqualified terms of praise in which he speaks of me to you as well as to everyone else. I am only apprehensive lest the warmth of his kind feeling carry him beyond

the due limits: for he, who is so free from all other errors, is apt to fall into just this one good-natured one, of over-rating the merits of his friends. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Catilius Severus.

I will come to supper, but must make this agreement beforehand, that I go when I please, that you treat me to nothing expensive, and that our conversation abound only in Socratic discourse, while even that in moderation. There are certain necessary visits of ceremony, bringing people out before daylight, which Cato himself could not safely fall in with; though I must confess that Julius Caesar * reproaches him with that circumstance in such a manner as redounds to his praise: for he tells us that the persons who met him reeling home blushed at the discovery, and adds, 'You would have thought that Cato had detected them, and not they Cato.' Could he place the dignity of Cato in a stronger light than by representing him thus venerable even in his cups? But let our supper be as moderate in regard to hours as in the preparation and expense: for we are not of such eminent reputation that even our enemies cannot censure our conduct without applauding it at the same time. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* Voconius Romanus.

In compliance with your demand, I have sent you the panegyric delivered in my late consulship in honour of our most excellent prince;† and I had intended to do so, even though you had not made the demand. I could wish, when you read over this performance, you would reflect upon the difficulty as well as the dignity of the subject. In other compositions, where the reader is unacquainted with this, its very novelty engages his chief attention; but in a subject of this kind, everything that can be said

* Julius Caesar wrote an invective against Cato of Utica, to which it is probable, Pliny here alludes. *M.*

† Trajan.

is so familiar and so hackneyed that, quietly taking the subject-matter for granted, as it were, he pays attention merely to the author's manner and style, where it is harder to give satisfaction when this is the only point taken into account. And I only wish that at least my method of arrangement, my transitions, and my metaphors, might be considered in combination. A strong imagination and a grandeur of expression will break out occasionally in the most unpolished writer; but regularity in the plan of a work, and proper variety in the management of the metaphors, are characteristics peculiar to learning and culture alone. The lofty and sublime should not by any means always be affected. For as nothing sets off the lights in a picture more than shade does, so the plain and simple in writing is just as graceful and appropriate as the sublime. But I forget that I am talking to one who is so absolute a critic in these matters. I should rather beg of you to point out to me what you may think requires correction: for if I find there are certain parts you dislike, I shall be more inclined to believe you approve of the rest. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* ACILIUS.

The atrocious treatment that Largius Macedo, a man of praetorian rank, lately received at the hands of his slaves is so extremely tragical that it deserves a place rather in public history than in a private letter; though it must at the same time be acknowledged there was a haughtiness and severity in his behaviour towards them which shewed that he little remembered, indeed almost entirely forgot, the fact that his own father had once been in that station of life. He was bathing at his Formian Villa, when he found himself suddenly surrounded by his slaves; one seizes him by the throat, another strikes him on the mouth, whilst others trampled upon his breast, stomach, and even other parts which I need not mention. When they thought the breath must be quite out of his body, they threw him down upon the heated pavement of the bath, to try whether he were still alive, where he lay outstretched and motionless, either really insensible or only feigning to be so,

upon which they concluded him to be actually dead. In this condition they brought him out, pretending that he had got suffocated by the heat of the bath. Some of his more trusty servants received him, and his mistresses came about him shrieking and lamenting. The noise of their cries and the fresh air, together, brought him a little to himself; he opened his eyes, moved his body, and shewed them (as he now safely might) that he was not quite dead. The murderers immediately made their escape; but most of them have been caught again. and they are after the rest. He was with great difficulty kept alive for a few days, and then expired, having however the satisfaction of finding himself as amply revenged in his lifetime as he would have been after his death. Thus you see to what affronts, indignities, and dangers we are exposed. Lenity and kind treatment are no safeguard; for it is malice and not reflection that arms such ruffians against their masters. So much for this piece of news. And what else? What else? Nothing else, or you should hear it, for I have still paper, and time too (as it is holiday time with me) to spare for more, and I can tell you one further circumstance relating to Macedo, which now occurs to me. As he was in a public bath once, at Rome, a remarkable, and (judging from the manner of his death) an ominous, accident happened to him. A slave of his. in order to make way for his master, laid his hand gently upon a Roman knight, who, turning suddenly round, struck, not the slave who had touched him, but Macedo, so violent a blow with his open palm that he almost knocked him down. Thus the bath by a kind of gradation proved fatal to him; being first the scene of an indignity he suffered, afterwards the scene of his death. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* Silius Proculus.

You desire me to read your poems in my retirement, and to examine whether they are fit for publication. And you add entreaties to this effect, adducing indeed a precedent; for after requesting me to take some of my spare time from my own studies and devote it to yours, you

remind me that Cicero was remarkable for his generous encouragement and patronage of poetical geniuses. But you do me injustice in supposing I need either request or entreaty upon this occasion, being myself not only a most religious votary of the same muse, but having also the warmest friendship for you: I shall therefore do as you desire with as much attention as pleasure. I believe I may venture, even now, to write you word that your work is excellent, and ought by no means to be suppressed, so far as I could form an opinion from what I heard you read of it, if indeed I was not imposed upon by your elocution, for you are a most pleasing, masterly, reader. I trust, however, the charming cadence did not entirely disarm the force of my criticism; it might possibly a little soften its severity, but could not totally turn its edge. I think therefore I may now safely pronounce this my opinion of your poems in general; what they are in their several parts, I shall judge when I read them. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* NEPOS.

I have constantly observed that amongst the deeds and sayings of illustrious persons of either sex, some have made more noise in the world, whilst others have been really greater, although less talked about; and I am confirmed in this opinion by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that celebrated Arria, who animated her husband to meet death, by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, no less heroic than this applauded action of hers, though taken less notice of, and I think you will be as surprised to read the account of them as I was to hear it. Her husband Caecinna Paetus, and her son, were both attacked at the same time with a fatal illness, as was supposed; of which the son died, a youth of remarkable beauty, and as modest as he was comely, endeared indeed to his parents no less by his many graces than from the fact of his being their son. His mother prepared his funeral and conducted the usual ceremonies so privately that Paetus did not know of his death

Whenever she came into his room, she pretended her son was alive and actually better: and as often as he enquired after his health, would answer, 'He has had a good rest, and eaten his food with quite an appetite.' Then when she found the tears, she had so long kept back, gushing forth in spite of herself, she would leave the room, and having given vent to her grief, return with dry eyes and a serene countenance, as though she had dismissed every feeling of bereavement at the door of her husband's chamber. I must confess it was a brave action* in her to draw the steel, plunge it into her breast, pluck out the dagger, and present it to her husband with that ever memorable, I had almost said that divine, expression, 'Paetus, it is not painful.' But when she spoke and acted thus, she had the prospect of glory and immortality before her; how far greater, without the support of any such animating motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully to act the mother, when a mother no more!

Scribonianus† had taken up arms in Illyria against Claudius, where he lost his life, and Paetus, who was of

* The following is the story, as related by several of the ancient historians. Paetus, having joined Scribonianus, who was in arms, in Illyria, against Claudius, was taken after the death of Scribonianus, and condemned to death. Arria having, in vain, solicited his life, persuaded him to destroy himself, rather than suffer the ignominy of falling by the executioner's hands; and, in order to encourage him to an act, to which, it seems, he was not particularly inclined, she set him the example in the manner Pliny relates.

'In a pleasure-house belonging to the villa Ludovisa, at Rome, there is a fine statue representing this action: Pactus is stabbing himself with one hand, and holds up the dying Arria with the other. Her sinking body hangs so loose as if every joint were relaxed.' Wright's Travels.

Martial also has celebrated this heroic action in a famous epigram:

'*Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Paeto,*
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis;
Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, hoc mihi, Paete, dolet.'

L. i. 14.

TRANSLATION.

'When from her breast chaste Arria snatch'd the sword,
And gave the deathful weapon to her lord,
"My wound," she said, "believe me, does not smart;
'Tis thine alone, my Paetus, pains my heart."' *M.*

† Furius Camillus Scribonianus, governor of Dalmatia.

party, was brought prisoner to Rome. When they were going to put him on board ship, Arria besought the soldiers that she might be permitted to attend him: 'For surely,' she urged, 'you will allow a man of consular rank some servants to dress him, attend on him at meals, and put his shoes on for him; but if you will take me, I alone will perform all these offices.' Her request was refused; upon which she hired a fishing-boat, and in that small vessel followed the ship. On her return to Rome, meeting the wife of Scribonianus in the emperor's palace, at the time when this woman voluntarily gave evidence against the conspirators—'What,' she exclaimed, 'shall I hear you even speak to me, you, on whose bosom your husband Scribonianus was murdered, and yet you survive him?'—an expression which plainly shews that the noble manner in which she put an end to her life was no unpremeditated effect of sudden passion. Moreover, when Thrasea, her son-in-law, was endeavouring to dissuade her from her purpose of destroying herself, and, amongst other arguments which he used, said to her, 'Would you then advise your daughter to die with me if my life were to be taken from me?' 'Most certainly I would,' she replied, 'if she had lived as long, and in as much harmony with you, as I have with my Paetus.' This answer greatly increased the alarm of her family, and made them watch her for the future more narrowly; which, when she perceived, 'It is of no use,' she said, 'you may oblige me to effect my death in a more painful way, but it is impossible you should prevent it.' Saying this, she sprang from her chair, and running her head with the utmost violence against the wall, fell down, to all appearance, dead; but being brought to herself again, 'I told you,' she said, 'if you would not suffer me to take an easy path to death, I should find a way to it, however hard.' Now, is there not, my friend, something much greater in all this than in the so-much-talked-of 'Paetus, it is not painful,' to which these led the way? And yet this last is the favourite topic of fame, while all the former are passed over in silence. Whence I cannot but infer, what I observed at the beginning of my letter, that some actions are more celebrated, whilst others are really greater.

LETTER XVII. *To* Julius Servianus.

Is there anything the matter, that I have not heard from you so long, or is it, that there is nothing the matter, but you are simply too busy to write, or, if not too busy, are your opportunities of sending letters few or none? Do relieve my anxiety, which is more than I can bear; and do so, even though it be at the trouble of an express messenger: I will gladly pay his expenses, and reward him too, let him only bring me the news I wish for.—As for myself, I am quite well, if being well means living on in a state of the utmost suspense and anxiety, hourly expecting and dreading every conceivable sort of accident that can possibly befall the friend one most tenderly loves. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Severus.

I was obliged by my consular office to compliment the emperor * in the name of the republic; but after I had performed that ceremony in the senate in the usual manner, and as fully as the time and place would allow, I thought it agreeable to the affection of a good subject to enlarge those general heads, and expand them into a complete discourse. My principal object in doing so was, to confirm the emperor in his virtues, by paying them that tribute of applause which they so justly deserve; and at the same time to direct future princes, not in the formal way of lecture, but by *his* more engaging example, to those paths they must pursue if they would attain the same heights of glory. To instruct princes how to form their conduct, is a noble, but difficult task, and may, perhaps, be esteemed an act of presumption: but to applaud the character of an accomplished prince, and to hold out to posterity, by this means, a beacon-light as it were, to guide succeeding monarchs, is a method equally useful, and much more modest. It afforded me a very singular pleasure that when I wished to recite this panegyric in a private

* Trajan.

assembly, my friends gave me their company, though I did not solicit them in the usual form of notes or circulars, but only desired their attendance, 'should it be quite convenient to them,' and 'if they should happen to have no other engagement.' You know the excuses generally made at Rome to avoid invitations of this kind; how prior invitations are usually alleged; yet, in spite of the worst possible weather, they attended the recital for two days together; and when I thought it would be unreasonable to detain them any longer, they insisted upon my going through with it the next day. Shall I consider this as an honour done to myself or to literature? Rather let me suppose to the latter, which, though well-nigh extinct, seems to be now again reviving amongst us. Yet what was the subject which raised this uncommon attention? No other than what formerly, even in the senate, where we *had* to submit to it, we used to grudge even a few moments' attention to. But now, you see, we have patience to recite and attend to the same topic for three days together; and the reason of this is, not that we have more eloquent writing now than formerly, but we write under a fuller sense of individual freedom, and consequently more genially than we used to. It is an additional glory therefore to our present emperor that this sort of harangue, which was once as disgusting as it was false, is now as pleasing as it is sincere. But it was not only the earnest attention of my audience which afforded me pleasure; I was greatly delighted too with the justness of their taste: for I observed, that the more nervous parts of my discourse gave them peculiar satisfaction. It is true, indeed, this work, which was written for the perusal of the world in general, was read only to a few; however, I would willingly look upon their particular judgment as an earnest of that of the public, and rejoice at their manly taste as if it were universally spread. It was just the same in eloquence as it was in music, the vitiated ears of the audience introduced a depraved style; but now, I am inclined to hope, as a more refined judgment prevails in the public, our compositions of both kinds will improve too; for those authors whose sole object is to please will fashion their works according to the popular taste. I trust, however, in

subjects of this nature the florid style is most proper; and am so far from thinking that the vivid colouring I have used will be esteemed foreign and unnatural that I am most apprehensive that censure will fall upon those parts where the diction is most simple and un-ornate. Nevertheless, I sincerely wish the time may come, and that it now were, when the smooth and luscious, which has affected our style, shall give place, as it ought, to severe and chaste composition.—Thus have I given you an account of my doings of these last three days, that your absence might not entirely deprive you of a pleasure which, from your friendship to me, and the part you take in everything that concerns the interest of literature, I know you would have received, had you been there to hear. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* Calvisius Rufus.

I must have recourse to you, as usual, in an affair which concerns my finances. An estate adjoining my land, and indeed running into it, is for sale. There are several considerations strongly inclining me to this purchase, while there are others no less weighty deterring me from it. Its first recommendation is, the beauty which will result from uniting this farm to my own lands; next, the advantage as well as pleasure of being able to visit it without additional trouble and expense; to have it superintended by the same steward, and almost by the same sub-agents, and to have one villa to support and embellish, the other just to keep in common repair. I take into this account furniture, housekeepers, fancy-gardeners, artificers, and even hunting-apparatus, as it makes a very great difference whether you get these altogether into one place or scatter them about in several. On the other hand, I don't know whether it is prudent to expose so large a property to the same climate, and the same risks of accident happening; to distribute one's possessions about seems a safer way of meeting the caprices of fortune, besides, there is something extremely pleasant in the change of air and place, and the going about between one's properties. And now, to come

to the chief consideration:—the lands are rich, fertile, and well-watered, consisting chiefly of meadow-ground, vineyard, and wood, while the supply of building timber and its returns, though moderate, still, keep at the same rate. But the soil, fertile as it is, has been much impoverished by not having been properly looked after. The person last in possession used frequently to seize and sell the stock, by which means, although he lessened his tenants' arrears for the time being, yet he left them nothing to go on with and the arrears ran up again in consequence. I shall be obliged, then, to provide them with slaves, which I must buy, and at a higher than the usual price, as these will be good ones; for I keep no fettered slaves* myself, and there are none upon the estate. For the rest, the price, you must know, is three millions of sesterces.† It has formerly gone for five millions,‡ but owing, partly to the general hardness of the times, and partly to its being thus stripped of tenants. the income of this estate is reduced, and consequently its value. You will be inclined perhaps to enquire whether I can easily raise the purchase-money? My estate, it is true, is almost entirely in land, though I have some money out at interest; but I shall find no difficulty in borrowing any sum I may want. I can get it from my wife's mother, whose purse I may use with the same freedom as my own; so that you need not trouble yourself at all upon that point, should you have no other objections, which I should like you very carefully to consider: for, as in everything else, so, particularly in matters of economy, no man has more judgment and experience than yourself. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* MESSIUS MAXIMUS.

You remember, no doubt, to have read what commotions were occasioned by the ballot law,§ and how much ap-

* The Romans used to employ their criminals in the lower offices of husbandry, such as ploughing, &c. Plin. H. N. l. 18, 3. *M.*

† About £23,430.

‡ About £49,060.

§ The author of this law was one Gabinius, a tribune of the people,

proval and reproach alike, it earned for its originator Yet this very law the senate lately unanimously received as the best possible, and, upon the election day, called for the ballots with one consent. It must be owned, the method by open votes had introduced into the senate more riot and disorder than is seen even in popular assemblies; order in speaking, modesty of silence, dignity of position, were alike disregarded, and it was universal noise and discord, the patrons all running backwards and forwards with their candidates, groups and circles innumerable formed in the middle of the senate-house, and, in short, the most indecent confusion generally. Thus widely had we departed from the ways of our ancestors, who conducted these elections with an order, calmness, and decency suitable to the reverence due to the majesty of the senate. I have been told by some who remember those times that the method observed in their assemblies was this: the name of the individual who offered himself for any office being called over, a profound silence ensued, when immediately the candidate appeared, who, after he had spoken for himself, and given an account to the senate of his life and behaviour generally, called witnesses in support of his character. These were, either the person under whom he had served in the army, or to whom he had been quaestor, or both (if the case admitted of it), to whom he also joined some of those friends who espoused his interest. They said what they had to say in his favour, in few but impressive words: and this had far more influence than the modern method of humble solicitation. Sometimes the candidate would object either to the birth, or age, or character, of his competitor; to which the senate would listen with a severe and impartial attention: and thus merit was generally preferred to interest. But corruption having abused this wise institution of our ancestors, we were obliged to have recourse to balloting as the most probable remedy for the evil. The method being new, and immediately put into practice, it answered the present purpose very well: but, I am afraid,

A.U. 614. It gave a very considerable blow to the influence of the nobility, as in this way of balloting it could not be discovered on which side the people gave their votes, and consequently took off that restraint they before lay under, by the fear of offending their superiors. M

in process of time it will introduce new abuses; for there is the danger, in this mode of balloting, of the most shameless partiality insinuating itself in. For how few there are who preserve the same delicacy of conduct in secret as when before the world. Many people have a most tender regard for their character, few for their conscience. But perhaps I am pronouncing too hastily upon the future. Meanwhile we shall obtain by the benefit of this method of voting an election of such magistrates as best deserve the honour. For it was with us as with those judges who are named upon the spot, we were taken before we had time to be biassed, and therefore determined impartially. I give you all this principally by way of news, and also because I am glad to seize every opportunity of speaking about the republic; a subject which, as we have fewer occasions of mentioning than our ancestors, so we ought to be more careful not to let any of them slip. And, goodness me, are we always to go on repeating over and over the same every-day conventionalities, 'How do you do?' and 'I hope you are well.' Do let our letters have something in them not common and ordinary and keeping within the limits of our own private concerns. It is true, indeed, the direction of the public weal is in the hands of a single person, who, for the general good, takes it solely upon himself to ease us of the care and weight of government; but still that bountiful source of power permits, by a very generous dispensation, some streams to flow down to us: and of these we may not only taste ourselves; but, in this way, administer them, as it were, to our absent friends. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* Cornelius Priscus.

I have just heard of Valerius Martial's death, which gives me great concern. He was a man of an acute and lively genius, and his writings abound in equal wit, satire, and kindliness. On his leaving Rome I made him a present to defray his travelling expenses, which I gave him, not only as a testimony of friendship, but also in return for the verses with which he had complimented me. It was

the custom of the ancients to distinguish those poets with honours or pecuniary rewards, who had celebrated particular individuals or cities in their verses; but this good custom, along with every other fair and noble one, has grown out of fashion now; and in consequence of our having ceased to act laudably, we consider praise a folly and impertinence. You may perhaps be curious to see the verses which merited this acknowledgment from me, and I believe I can, from memory, partly satisfy your curiosity, without referring you to his works: but if you should be pleased with this specimen of them, you must turn to his poems for the rest. He addresses himself to his muse, whom he directs to go to my house upon the Esquiliae,* but to approach it with respect.

'Go, wanton muse, but go with care,
Nor meet, ill-tim'd, my Pliny's ear;
He, by sage Minerva taught,
Gives the day to studious thought,
And plans that eloquence divine,
Which shall to future ages shine,
And rival, wondrous Tully! thine.
Then, cautious, watch the vacant hour,
When Bacchus reigns in all his pow'r;
When, crowned with rosy chaplets gay,
Catos might read my frolic lay.' †

Do you not think that the poet who wrote of me in such terms deserved some friendly marks of my bounty *then*, and of my sorrow *now*? For he gave me the very best he had to bestow, and would have given more had it been in his power. Though indeed what can a man have conferred on him more valuable than the honour of never-fading praise? But his poems will not long survive their author, at least I think not, though he wrote them in the expectation of their doing so. Farewell.

* One of the famous seven hills upon which Rome was situated. *M.*
† Mart. lx. 19.

BOOK IV.

LETTER I. *To* Fabatus (*his wife's grandfather*).

You have long desired a visit from your grand-daughter* accompanied by me. Nothing, be assured, could be more agreeable to either of us; for we equally wish to see you, and are determined to delay that pleasure no longer. For this purpose we are already packing up, and hastening to you with all the speed the roads will permit of. We shall make only one, short, stoppage, for we intend turning a little out of our way to go into Tuscany: not for the sake of looking upon our estate, and into our family concerns, which we can postpone to another opportunity, but to perform an indispensable duty. There is a town near my estate, called Tifernum-upon-the-Tiber,† which, with more affection than wisdom, put itself under my patronage when I was yet a youth. These people celebrate my arrival among them, express the greatest concern when I leave them, and have public rejoicings whenever they hear of my preferments. By way of requiting their kindnesses (for what generous mind can bear to be excelled in acts of friendship?) I have built a temple in this place, at my own expense, and as it is finished, it would be a sort of impiety to put off its dedication any longer. So we shall be there on the day on which that ceremony is to be performed, and I have resolved to celebrate it with a general feast. We may possibly stay on there for all the next day, but shall make so much the greater haste in our journey afterwards. May we have the happiness to find you and your daughter in good health! In good spirits I I am sure we shall, should we get to you all safely. Farewell.

* Calpurnia, Pliny's wife. † Now Citta di Castello.

LETTER II. *To* Attius Clemens.

Regulus has lost his son; the only undeserved misfortune which could have befallen him, in that I doubt whether he thinks it a misfortune. The boy had quick parts, but there was no telling how he might turn out; however, he seemed capable enough of going right, were he not to grow up like his father. Regulus gave him his freedom,* in order to entitle him to the estate left him by his mother; and when he got into possession of it, (I speak of the current rumours, based upon the character of the man,) fawned upon the lad with a disgusting shew of fond affection which in a parent was utterly out of place. You may hardly think this credible; but then consider what Regulus is. However, he now expresses his concern for the loss of this youth in a most extravagant manner. The boy had a number of ponies for riding and driving, dogs both big and little, together with nightingales,† parrots, and blackbirds in abundance. All these Regulus slew ‡

* The Romans had an absolute power over their children, of which no age or station of the latter deprived them. See book viii. letter xviii. note. *M.*

† This bird was much esteemed amongst delicate eaters, and was sold at a high price. Horace mentions, as an instance of great extravagance, two brothers who used to dine upon them.

'*Quinti progenies Arri, par nobile fratrum—*
Luscinias soliti impenso prandere coëmtas.'

L. ii. Sat. iii. 243.

TRANSLATION.

'A noble pair of brothers—
On nightingales of monstrous purchase died.'

Francis. *M.*

‡ From an unaccountable notion prevalent among the ancients, that the ghosts delighted in blood, it was customary to kill a great number of beasts, and throw on the funeral pile. In the more ignorant and barbarous ages, men were the unhappy victims of this horrid rite. Even the compassionate Aeneas is represented by Virgil as practising this cruel ceremony, at the funeral honours which he performed to the memory of the unfortunate Pallas:

. . . . '*Sulmone creatos*
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
Viventes rapit; inferias quos immolat umbris,
Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammas.'

Aen. l. x. 517–520 *M.*

round the funeral pile. It was not grief, but an ostentatious parade of grief. He is visited upon this occasion by a surprising number of people, who all hate and detest the man, and yet are as assiduous in their attendance upon him as if they really esteemed and loved him, and, to give you my opinion in a word, in endeavouring to do Regulus a kindness, make themselves exactly like him. He keeps himself in his park on the other side the Tiber, where he has covered a vast extent of ground with his porticoes, and crowded all the shore with his statues; for he unites prodigality with excessive covetousness, and vain-glory with the height of infamy. At this very unhealthy time of year he is boring society, and he feels pleasure and consolation in being a bore. He says he wishes to marry,—a piece of perversity, like all his other conduct. You must expect, therefore, to hear shortly of the marriage of this mourner, the marriage of this old man; too early in the former case, in the latter, too late. You ask me why I conjecture this? Certainly not because he says so himself (for a greater liar never stepped), but because there is no doubt that Regulus will do whatever ought not to be done. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* ANTONINUS.

That you have twice enjoyed the dignity of consul, with a conduct equal to that of our most illustrious ancestors; that few (your modesty will not suffer me to say more) ever have or ever will come up to the integrity and wisdom of your Asiatic administration; that in virtue, in authority, and even in years you are the first of Romans; all this is excellent and honourable enough: nevertheless, I own, it is in your leisure hours that I admire you most. To season the severity of business with the sprightliness of wit, and to temper consummate wisdom with such exquisite courtesy, is an accomplishment as difficult as it is great: yet this you have attained in those wonderful

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TRANSLATION.

. . . . 'Four youths of Sulmo wrought,
And the like tale that Ufens erst into the world's life brought,
He takes alive to slay them—gifts for that dead ghost's avail,
And with a shower of captive blood to slake the dead man's bale.'
(Morris.)

charms, which grace both your conversation and your writings. Your lips, like the venerable old man's in Homer,* drop honey, and when you write, the bees seem to be employed in pouring into every line, and working into every sentence, their extracts of the choicest flowers. This was certainly what I felt on reading lately your Greek epigrams and iambics. What elegance, what beauties, shine in this collection! What sweetness and tenderness are there, what wit, and how conformable is the whole to the canons of just criticism! I fancied I had in my hands Callimachus† or Herodes, or, if possible, some poet even superior to these: though, indeed, neither of those authors have either excelled in or attempted both these species of poetry. Is it possible that a Roman can be such a master of Greek? I protest I do not believe Athens herself can be more Attic. In short, I cannot but envy Greece the honour of your preference: and since you can write thus eloquently in a foreign and transplanted language, one need not conjecture what you could have performed in your own. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* Sossius Senecio.

I have the truest regard for Calvisius Nepos; as indeed he is a man of indefatigable industry, great eloquence, and (what I prefer to all the rest) of consummate integrity. He is very nearly related to your friend and my guest Calvisius, his nephew in fact. I beg therefore you

* . . . . Νέστωρ
ἡδυεπὴς ἀνόρουσε, λιγὺς Πυλίων ἀγορητὴς
τοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ γλώσσης μέλιτος γλυκίων ῥέεν αὐδή.
Iliad, i. 247–249.

TRANSLATION.

Nestor, the leader of the Pylian host,
The smooth-tongued chief, from whose persuasive lips
Sweeter than honey flow'd the stream of speech.'
(Lord Derby.)

† A celebrated poet and grammarian of Alexandria. He is said to have written 800 works in prose and verse. His poems found many admirers and imitators at Rome, amongst the latter Catullus and Propertius, who translated several pieces of his. He flourished about the middle of the 3rd century, B.C.

will honour him with a half-yearly tribuneship* both on his own account and his uncle's. You will oblige me, you will oblige our friend Calvisius, you will oblige Nepos himself, whom, I am persuaded, you will think equally deserving your favour. You have conferred many kindnesses upon many people, but I will venture to say never one that was better bestowed than in the present instance, and few, perhaps, so well. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* SPARSUS.

It is said that when Aeschines,† at the request of the Rhodians, read to them his own speech, and then that which Demosthenes had delivered upon the same occasion, both were received with the loudest applause. I am not surprised that the harangues of such excellent orators should be thus warmly admired, when I consider that even a speech of mine, which I lately recited before a very learned and critical audience, was heard with equal earnestness and approbation, and at equal risk of fatigue, during two successive days, although there was no occasional comparison of respective merits, no rivalry, as it were, to awaken their attention. The Rhodians, besides the particular merit of the speeches themselves, had their curiosity excited by comparing them together, but mine, though destitute of that recommendation, had the good fortune to please; whether deservedly or not, you will judge when you read the performance; the extent of which will not permit me to preface it with a longer letter. I must therefore be as short as possible here, in order to reconcile you the better to the length of the accompanying speech; which, however, I have not enlarged beyond the bounds my subject required. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* JULIUS NASO.

A storm of hail has, I am told, destroyed all the produce of my estate in Tuscany; while that which I have on

* Their business was to decide all controversies in the army, to take care of the works and camp, &c. Their command lasted but six months. Kennet's Rom. Antiq. *M.*

† See book ii. letter iii.

the other side the Po, though it has proved extremely fertile this season, yet, from the excessive cheapness of everything, turns to small account. Laurentum is the single possession which yields me any return. I have nothing there, indeed, but a house and gardens; all the rest is barren sands; still, however, my best productions spring up at Laurentum. It is there I cultivate, if not my lands, at least my mind, and employ a great deal of my time in writing. As in other places I can shew you full barns, so here I can entertain you with good store of the literary kind. Let me advise you then, if you wish for fertile and never-failing possession, to purchase some spot upon this coast. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* Catius Lepidus.

I often tell you that there is a certain force of character about Regulus: it is wonderful how he carries through what he has set his mind to. He chose lately to be extremely concerned for the loss of his son: accordingly he mourned for him as never man mourned before. He took it into his head to have an immense number of statues and pictures of him; immediately all the artisans in Rome are set to work. Canvas, wax, brass, silver, gold, ivory, marble, all exhibit the figure of the young Regulus. Not long ago he read, before a numerous audience, a memoir of his son: a memoir of a mere boy! However he read it. He wrote likewise a sort of circular letter to the several Decurii,* desiring them to choose out one of their order who had a strong clear voice, to read this eulogy to the people; it has been actually done. Now had this force of character, or whatever else you may call a fixed determination in obtaining whatever one has a mind for, been rightly applied, what infinite good it might have effected! The misfortune is, there is less of this quality about good people than about bad people, and as ignorance begets rashness, and thoughtfulness produces deliberation, so modesty is apt to cripple the action of virtue, whilst con-

* See book i. letter viii. in note.

fidence strengthens vice. Regulus is a case in point: he has a weak voice, an awkward delivery, an indistinct utterance, a slow imagination, and no memory; in a word, he possesses nothing but a sort of frantic energy: and yet, by the assistance of a flighty turn and much impudence, he passes as an orator. Herennius Senecio admirably reversed Cato's * definition of an orator, and applied it to Regulus: 'An orator,' he said, 'is a bad man, unskilled in the art of speaking.' And really Cato's definition is not a more exact description of a true orator than Senecio's is of the character of this man. Would you make me a suitable return for this letter? Let me know if you, or any of my friends in your town, have, like a stroller in the market-place, read this doleful production of Regulus's, 'raising,' as Demosthenes says, 'your voice most merrily, and straining every muscle in your throat.' For so absurd a performance must excite laughter rather than compassion; and indeed the composition is as puerile as the subject. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* MATURUS ARRIANUS.

My advancement to the dignity of augur † is an honour that justly indeed merits your congratulations; not only because it is highly honourable to receive, even in the slightest instances, a testimony of the approbation of so wise and discreet a prince,‡ but because it is moreover an ancient and religious institution, which has this sacred and peculiar privilege annexed to it, that it is for life.§ Other sacerdotal offices, though they may, perhaps, be almost equal to this one in dignity, yet as they are given

* Cato composed a treatise upon rhetoric, for the use of his son, in which he defined an orator to be 'a good man skilled in the art of speaking.' *M.*

† Their business was to interpret dreams, oracles, prodigies, &c., and to foretell whether any action should be fortunate or prejudicial, to particular persons, or to the whole commonwealth. Upon this account, they very often occasioned the displacing of magistrates, the deferring of public assemblies, &c. Kennet's Rom. Antiq. *M.*

‡ Trajan.

§ See book ii. letter i. in note.

so they may be taken away again: but fortune has no further power over *this* than to bestow it. What recommends this dignity still more highly is, that I have the honour to succeed so illustrious a person as Julius Frontinus. He for many years, upon the nomination-day of proper persons to be received into the sacred college, constantly proposed me, as though he had a view to electing me as his successor; and since it actually has proved so in the event, I am willing to look upon it as something more than mere accident. But the circumstance, it seems, that most pleases you in this affair, is, that Cicero enjoyed the same post; and you rejoice (you tell me) to find that I follow his steps as closely in the path of honours as I endeavour to do in that of eloquence. I wish, indeed, that as I had the advantage of being admitted earlier into the same order of priesthood, and into the consular office, than Cicero, that so I might, in my later years, catch some spark, at least, of his divine genius! The former, indeed, being at man's disposal, may be conferred on me and on many others, but the latter it is as presumptuous to hope for as it is difficult to reach, being in the gift of heaven alone. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Ursus.

We have been engaged for several days past in the case of Julius Bassus, a man grown familiar with misfortunes, and rendered conspicuous by a series of calamities. In the reign of Vespasian two private persons laid an information against him, and the matter being referred to the senate, he was kept a long time in suspense and finally honourably acquitted. During the reign of Titus, he was under continual apprehensions of his displeasure, as being known to favour the interests of Domitian: yet when that emperor ascended the throne Bassus was sent into exile, though afterwards recalled by Nerva. Having obtained the proconsulship of Bithynia, he was, on his return from thence, accused of bribery and extortion, and as warmly prosecuted as he was stoutly defended. The senate were much divided in opinion, however the majority were on the more favour

able side. Pomponius Rufus, a ready and impetuous speaker, was counsel against him. He was assisted by Theophanes, one of the provincial deputies, and indeed the origin and instigator of this prosecution. I began the reply, for Bassus insisted that the foundation of his defence should be laid by me. He desired me to represent the consideration due to his illustrious birth, and to the very prosecution itself he had formerly suffered; that his accusers were informers by profession, who reaped considerable advantage by their trade;* and to put forward the true reasons which rendered him odious to the most factious among them, and particularly Theophanes; but, above all, to meet the principal charge brought against him: for on the score of the rest, however much more serious they might sound, he deserved not only acquittal but high commendation. The great difficulty of the case was, that in the simplicity of his heart, he had incautiously received certain friendly gifts from some people in the province (for he had been among them before as quaestor). This, which his accusers called rapine and extortion, Bassus justified under the name of *presents*. But then the laws expressly forbid persons in his station to receive any presents whatsoever. Now what should I do here, what mode of defence should I adopt upon this occasion? If I denied the fact, I was afraid it would look like a tacit confession that it actually was extortion: besides, to disown what was so notorious, would be to strengthen rather than to extenuate, the charge, especially when the accused had put that out of the power of his counsel, if they had thought it proper; for he had acknowledged to several persons, and particularly to the emperor, that he had received and returned a few slight presents upon his birth-day, and at the feast of the Saturnalia.† Should I appeal to the clemency of the court? That would be ruining my client at once, by conceding the nature of his offence to be such, that there was no other way of saving him. Should I then justify the fact? But in so doing, I should have injured my own

* Informers had a fourth part of the effects of the persons convicted. *M.*

† Celebrated in honour of Saturn; at which time it was customary for friends to send presents to one another. *M.*

character, without rendering any service to Bassus. Under these difficulties I thought it would be best to steer a middle course; and, I flatter myself, I happily hit upon it. But night, coming on, separated, as usual, the combatants. I had spoken for three hours and a half, so that I had still an hour and a half remaining. For the law, having allowed six hours to the plaintiff and nine to the defendant, Bassus had so divided this portion of time between me and the advocate who was to speak after me that I had five hours, and the latter the rest. But perceiving my speech to have made a favourable impression upon the senate, I thought it would be more advisable not to say any more; for it is not prudent, you know, to push one's success too far. Besides, I was apprehensive I should not have strength to renew the defence the next day, as it is much easier to go on without interruption than to resume after a long intermission. And there was yet another consideration which had great weight with me: I was afraid that, as the discontinuance of my speech would abate my own ardour, so the resumption of it might prove tiresome to my hearers. When an harangue is carried on in one continued flow, the speaker best keeps up his own fire, and the attention of the audience, both which are apt to cool and become languid upon a remission, just as a continued motion preserves the light of a torch, which, when once extinct, is not easily re-lighted. But Bassus, almost with tears, earnestly entreated me to proceed with his defence for the remainder of the time, and I accordingly complied, preferring his interest to my own. The event proved agreeable to our wishes, for I found the attention of the senate as fresh and lively as if it had been rather animated than fatigued by my preceding speech. Lucceius Albinus spoke after me, and entered so thoroughly into my line of argument that our speeches, whilst they had the variety of different and distinct pleadings, had the connection and uniformity of one continued harangue. Herennius Pollio replied to us with great spirit and power, and after him Theophanes spoke again, in this, as in everything else, displaying his unusual assurance, in arrogating to himself more than the usual allowance of time for speaking, after two such eloquent persons, and of consular

dignity,* had immediately preceded him. He continued haranguing till evening, and even beyond it, for lights were brought in. The next day Titius Homulus and Fronto spoke admirably in behalf of Bassus. The fourth day was employed in going into the proofs. Baebius Macer, the consul elect, declared Bassus guilty, within the express words of the law relating to bribery and extortion. Caepio Hispo was of opinion that, without affecting his dignity, the case should be referred to the ordinary judges: both were right. You will wonder how that can possibly be, since they were so extremely different; but you will observe that Macer, who considered the mere letter of the law, might very reasonably condemn him, when it appeared he had taken presents contrary to its express prohibition. On the other hand, Caepio, supposing that the senate had a power (as undoubtedly it has) to mitigate or to urge the extreme rigour of the law, might, upon very good grounds, think this a case worthy of their clemency, as being (though indeed contrary to the express letter of the law, yet) not unfrequently practised. The motion of Caepio prevailed, and when he rose up to give the reasons for his vote, the same acclamations attended him as usually attend others when they resume their seats. You will easily judge, therefore, how great the applause was after he had delivered his opinion, when he had received such a singular mark of approbation before he had uttered a word. I find the opinions of those outside, as well as those in the senate, are divided: they who approve of Caepio's vote condemn Macer's as hard and severe: on the other hand, those who uphold Macer's opinion treat the other as overmild, and, in fact, inconsistent. It is a positive impropriety, they affirm, sending a man to be tried before the ordinary judges, and yet allowing him to retain his seat in the senate. There was a third opinion besides. Valerius Paulinus, who agreed with Caepio, was for adding further, that the senate should proceed against Theophanes, after he had discharged his commission as provincial deputy:

* The two persons here meant are Herennius Pollio and Pomponius Rufus, mentioned above, who pleaded against Bassus, on the same side with Theophanes. Some critics, indeed, suppose Pliny includes himself; but the contrary seems plain from the context. *M.*

for he insisted that Theophanes during the trial had been guilty of several of those misdemeanours which fell within the prohibition of this very law upon which he grounded his information against Bassus. But although this proposal was in general highly approved of by the senate, yet the consuls thought proper to drop it: Paulinus, however, had the full credit of so just and bold a motion. At the breaking up of the house, Bassus was received by large crowds of people with the greatest demonstrations of joy and the loudest acclamations. This new difficulty which he had fallen into had recalled the memory of his former troubles; and a name which had never been mentioned, but in conjunction with some misfortune, together with the appearance of a fine person broken with age and sorrow, had raised a general feeling of compassion towards him. You may look upon this letter as the fore-runner of my speech, which, full and copious as it is, I will send you at large. But you must not expect it soon; for it is too important a subject for a mere light cursory revision. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Statius Sabinus.

Your letter informs me that Sabina, who appointed you and me her heirs, though she has nowhere expressly directed that Modestus shall have his freedom, yet has left him a legacy in the following words, 'I give, &c.—To Modestus, whom I have ordered to have his freedom': upon which you desire my opinion. I have consulted skilful lawyers upon the point, and they all agree Modestus is not entitled to his liberty, since it is not *expressly* given, and consequently that the legacy is void, as being bequeathed to a slave.* But it evidently appears to be a mistake in the testatrix; and therefore I think we ought to act in this case as though Sabina had directed, in so many words, what, it is clear, she had ordered. I am persuaded you will go with me in this opinion, who so religiously regard the will of the deceased, which indeed where it can be discovered

* A slave was incapable of property; and, therefore, whatever he acquired became the right of his master. *M.*

will always be law to honest heirs. Honour is to you and me as strong an obligation as the compulsion of law is to others. Let Modestus then enjoy his freedom and his legacy as fully as if Sabina had observed all the requisite forms, as indeed they effectually do who make a judicious choice of their heirs. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* CORNELIUS MINICIANUS.

Have you heard—I suppose, not yet, for the news has but just arrived—that Valerius Licinianus has become a professor in Sicily? This unfortunate person, who lately enjoyed the dignity of praetor, and was esteemed the most eloquent of our advocates, is now fallen from a senator to an exile, from an orator to a teacher of rhetoric. Accordingly in his inaugural speech he uttered, sorrowfully and solemnly, the following words: 'Oh! Fortune, how capriciously dost thou sport with mankind! Thou makest rhetoricians of senators, and senators of rhetoricians!' A sarcasm so poignant and full of gall that one might almost imagine he fixed upon this profession merely for the sake of an opportunity of applying it. And having made his first appearance in school, clad in the Greek cloak (for exiles have no right to wear the toga), after arranging himself and looking down upon his attire, 'I am, however,' he said, 'going to declaim in Latin.' You will think, perhaps, this situation, wretched and deplorable as it is, is what he well deserves for having stained the honourable profession of an orator with the crime of incest. It is true, indeed, he pleaded guilty to the charge; but whether from a consciousness of his guilt, or from an apprehension of worse consequences if he denied it, is not clear; for Domitian generally raged most furiously where his evidence failed him most hopelessly. That emperor had determined that Cornelia, chief of the Vestal Virgins,* should be buried alive, from an extrava

* 'Their office was to attend upon the rites of Vesta, the chief part of which was the preservation of the holy fire. If this fire happened to go out, it was considered impiety to light it at any common flame, but they made use of the pure and unpolluted rays of the sun for that purpose. There were various other duties besides connected with their

gant notion that exemplary severities of this kind conferred lustre upon his reign. Accordingly, by virtue of his office as supreme pontiff, or, rather, in the exercise of a tyrant's cruelty, a despot's lawlessness, he convened the sacred college, not in the pontifical court where they usually assemble, but at his villa near Alba; and there, with a guilt no less heinous than that which he professed to be punishing, he condemned her, when she was not present to defend herself, on the charge of incest, while he himself had been guilty, not only of debauching his own brother's daughter, but was also accessory to her death: for that lady, being a widow, in order to conceal her shame, endeavoured to procure an abortion, and by that means lost her life. However, the priests were directed to see the sentence immediately executed upon Cornelia. As they were leading her to the place of execution, she called upon Vesta, and the rest of the gods, to attest her innocence; and, amongst other exclamations, frequently cried out, 'Is it possible that Caesar can think me polluted, under the influence of whose sacred functions he has conquered and triumphed?'* Whether she said this in flattery or derision; whether it proceeded from a consciousness of her innocence, or contempt of the emperor, is uncertain; but she continued exclaiming in this manner, till she came to the place of execution, to which she was led, whether innocent or guilty I cannot say, at all events with every appearance and demonstration of innocence. As she was being lowered down into the subterranean vault, her robe happening to catch upon something in the descent, she turned round and disengaged it, when, the executioner offering his assist-

office. The chief rules prescribed them were, to vow the strictest chastity for the space of thirty years. After this term was completed, they had liberty to leave the order. If they broke their vow of virginity, they were buried alive in a place allotted to that peculiar use. Kennet's Antiq. Their reputation for sanctity was so high that Livy mentions the fact of two of those virgins having violated their vows, as a prodigy that threatened destruction to the Roman state. Lib. xxii. c. 57. And Suetonius informs us that Augustus had so high an opinion of this religious order that he consigned the care of his will to the Vestal Virgins. Suet. in vit. Aug. c. 101. *M.*

* It was usual with Domitian to triumph, not only without a victory, but even after a defeat. *M.*

ance, she drew herself back with horror, refusing to be so much as touched by him, as though it were a defilement to her pure and unspotted chastity: still preserving the appearance of sanctity up to the last moment, and, among all the other instances of her modesty,

'She took great care to fall with decency.'*

Celer likewise, a Roman knight, who was accused of an intrigue with her, while they were scourging him with rods† in the Forum, persisted in exclaiming, 'What have I done?—I have done nothing.' These declarations of innocence had exasperated Domitian exceedingly, as imputing to him acts of cruelty and injustice, accordingly Licinianus being seized by the emperor's orders for having concealed a freedwoman of Cornelia's in one of his estates, was advised, by those who took him in charge, to confess the fact, if he hoped to obtain a remission of his punishment, and he complied with their advice. Herennius Senecio spoke for him in his absence, in some such words as Homer's

'Patroclus lies in death.'‡

'Instead of an advocate,' said he, 'I must turn informer: Licinianus has fled.' This news was so agreeable to Domitian that he could not help betraying his satisfaction: 'Then,' he exclaimed, 'has Licinianus acquitted us of injustice;' adding that he would not press too hard upon him in his disgrace. He accordingly allowed him to carry off such of his effects as he could secure before they were seized for the public use, and in other respects softened the sentence of banishment by way of reward for this voluntary confession. Licinianus was afterwards, through the clemency of the emperor Nerva, permitted to settle in Sicily, where he now professes rhetoric, and avenges himself upon

* Euripides' *Hecuba*.

† The punishment inflicted upon the violators of Vestal chastity was to be scourged to death. *M.*

‡ 'Beside him stood the noble Nestor's son,
And, weeping, thus his mournful message gave:
Alas! great son of Teleus, woful news,
Which, would to Heav'n I had not to impart,
To thee I bring: Patroclus lies in death.'
Iliad, book xviii. (Lord Derby's translation).

Fortune in his declamations.—You see how obedient I am to your commands, in sending you a circumstantial detail of foreign as well as domestic news. I imagined indeed, as you were absent when this transaction occurred, that you had only heard just in a general way that Licinianus was banished for incest, as fame usually makes her report in general terms, without going into particulars. I think I deserve in return a full account of all that is going on in your town and neighbourhood, where something worth telling about is usually happening; however, write what you please, provided you send me as long a letter as my own. I give you notice, I shall count not only the pages, but even the very lines and syllables. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Maturus Arrianus.

I know you love Egnatius Marcellinus, and indeed you have frequently mentioned him to me in terms of especial approval; but he will rise higher still in your affection and esteem when I inform you of his recent performance. When he went as quaestor into one of the provinces, the person to whose lot it fell to attend him as secretary, happening to die before his salary became due, Marcellinus had too delicate a sense of honour to think of appropriating that sum to his own use. On his return therefore he applied to Caesar, who referred the consideration of what should be done with this money to the senate. It was a question indeed of no great importance; however, a question it was. The heirs of the secretary claimed it for themselves, the treasury commissioners for the public. The case came on, and was opened by the counsel for the heirs, the public counsel speaking second, while both put their case remarkably well. Caecilius Strabo was of opinion that the money should be paid back into the treasury, Baebius Macer that it should be handed over to the heirs. Strabo won the day. Do, now, take the earliest opportunity, as I did, of expressing to Marcellinus your approbation of his conduct, for though indeed it abundantly suffices him to have earned the approval of the emperor and the senate, yet the additional evidence of

yours will give him very great pleasure. Those who are actuated by a sense of fame are wonderfully delighted to get praise, even though it comes from their inferiors; but Marcellinus respects you so deeply as to pay extreme regard to your opinion. To which let me add, it will increase his satisfaction when he finds that the fame of this action has travelled so far, so widely, and at such a rate, as to have reached your parts. For I do not know how it is, but mankind are generally more pleased with an extensive reputation than even a great one. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I am very glad of your safe arrival in Rome; for though I am always desirous to see you, I am more particularly so now. I shall be staying on a few days longer at my house at Tusculum, in order to finish a little business there I have in hand; for I am afraid, should I break off this design now that it is so nearly completed, I shall find it hard to take up again. Meanwhile, that I may lose no time, I send this letter before me to request a favour of you, which I hope shortly to ask in person. But before I inform you what my request is, I must let you into the occasion of it. Being lately over at my own native place, a young lad, son to one of my townsmen, called upon me. I asked him, 'Are you a student?' He replied, 'Yes.' 'And where at?' 'At Mediolanum.'* 'And why not here?' 'Because' (replied his father, who came with him) 'we have no professors in the place.' 'And why no professors?' I returned, 'for surely it nearly concerns you who are fathers' (and very opportunely several fathers were present to hear what I said) 'that your sons should receive their education here, rather than anywhere else? For where can they be better placed than in their own country, or kept under more virtuous restraint than under their parents' eye, or at less expense than at home? Now at what a very small additional expense might you, by a general contribution, procure proper masters, if you would

* Milan.

only apply towards the raising a salary for them the money you at present pay for your sons' travelling expenses, lodgings, and whatever else you lay out upon their education abroad; as pay you must, for every article of every kind. Now I have no children myself, at present, and will willingly contribute to a design so beneficial to my country, which I look upon in the light of a child, or a parent, a third part of any sum you may think proper to raise for this purpose. I would take upon myself the whole expense, were I not apprehensive of my benefaction being hereafter abused and perverted to private ends, as I have observed to be the case in several places where teachers are engaged at the public expense. The only way of meeting this evil is to leave the choosing of the professors solely in the hands of the parents, whose obligation to make a proper choice will be enforced by the necessity of having to pay towards the professors' salaries. For though they may be negligent in disposing of another's bounty, they will certainly be cautious how they apply their own; and will see that none but those who deserve it shall receive my money, when they must, at the same time, receive theirs as well. Let my example then encourage you to unite heartily together in this useful design, and be assured the greater the sum my proportion shall amount to, the more agreeable it will be to me. You can undertake nothing that will be more to your children's advantage, or more acceptable to your country. Your sons will, by these means, receive their education where they receive their birth, and be accustomed from their infancy to love and cling to their native soil. May you be able to procure professors of such distinguished abilities that the neighbouring towns shall be glad to draw their learning from hence; and as you now send your children elsewhere for education, so in the same way may other people's children hereafter flock here for their instruction!'

I thought it advisable to explain the whole affair to you, that you might the better understand how agreeable it will be to me, if you undertake the office I request. I do request you therefore, and, in consideration of the importance of the matter, entreat you, to look out, amongst the multitude of men of letters whom your genius draws round

you, proper persons to whom we may apply for this purpose; but with this reservation, that I be not tied down to any particular man. For I would leave it entirely free to the parents to judge and select as they shall think fit: I take upon myself nothing but the trouble and expense. If therefore anyone shall be found who thinks himself qualified for the office, he may go there, but on the express understanding that he goes without relying upon anything but his own merit. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* PATERNUS.

You expect perhaps, as usual, a speech, but I am going to make you a present instead, by way of something choice and curious, of some lighter compositions of mine. You will receive then, along with this letter, some hendecasyllabics,* written by myself in order to while away an idle hour upon the road, in the bath, or at table. They were composed upon different occasions, just as I found myself in a gay, a light, an amorous, a melancholy, or satirical, humour, and accordingly the style is sometimes more lively, at other times inclining rather to the severely simple. I endeavoured by this variety to suit different tastes, while some things may be found among them to please everyone. Should you meet with any passages which may seem somewhat too free in their tone, your reading will supply you with my apology, in the example of those great and august names that have preceded me in the same kind of writing, who without scruple have employed not only the warmest descriptions, but the plainest terms. This, however, is a liberty I have not allowed myself; not as pretending to more severity (for why should I?), but because, in truth, I have less courage. Nevertheless, I entirely approve of

* A verse consisting of eleven syllables. Tennyson's Hendecasyllabics, of which we subjoin a specimen, afford a good illustration of the metre, in English.

> 'O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
> Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
> Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
> All composed in a metre of Catullus,' &c.

the rule which Catullus lays down for this style of composition :

> 'True poets should be chaste, I know,
> But wherefore should their lines be so?
> To these what gives their zest and charm,
> But this, that they are free and warm?' *

You must look upon it as an instance of the great value I set upon your judgment, that I venture to submit the whole to your examination, rather than select out some of the more finished pieces for your approbation. Indeed in miscellaneous collections of this kind, what would pass off well enough if they were viewed separately, lose all their advantage by appearing in better company. A reader of sense and discernment ought not to compare different sorts of pieces with one another, but examine each by itself, and, if it is perfect of its kind, not condemn it because it happens to fall short of another of a different nature. But what need I say more, for to attempt to excuse trifles by a long preface, is the most utter trifling of all. I will only therefore premise further that I intend calling these lays 'Hendecasyllabics,' in accordance with the measure in which the verses run. Call them, if you think proper, epigrams, idylls, eclogues, or (as many have) sonnets; in a word, give them just whatever name you please, I offer them only as 'Hendecasyllabics.' All I beg of your sincerity is, that you would speak your opinion of them to me with the same freedom that you would to others. This is not a very hard request to make. If, indeed, these little poetical essays were my only or my chief productions, it might seem, perhaps, a little harsh if one said, '*Find* your proper work,' but it is perfectly good-natured and well-bred to say, 'You have your own peculiar sphere.' Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* Fundanus.

If I can pretend to judgment in anything, it is undoubtedly in the singular affection which I have for

* Catullus, xvi. (Mr. Theodore Martin's translation).

Asinius Rufus. He is a person of the highest merit, and a friend to all good men, in which number why may I not venture to include myself? He and Tacitus (to whose worth you are no stranger) are united in the closest intimacy. If therefore you esteem us, you can but have the same favourable opinion of Rufus; for a similarity of manners and disposition is, you know, the strongest cement of friendship. He has several children: and in this, as in everything else, he acts the part of a friend to his country, by supplying it with a numerous race of citizens, which he sees with pleasure extend to a second generation; and this, moreover in an age when that lucrative adulation usually paid to those who have none* makes even one child seem a burden to some. But he scorns such base considerations, and thinks himself happy in the title of grandfather; for which he is indebted to Saturius Firmus: a person whom you would esteem as much as I do if you knew him as well. My design in all these particulars is, to let you see how extensive, how numerous a family you may oblige by conferring a single favour: a favour I am induced to ask, first by my wishes, next by the certainty that you will soon be in a condition to grant them. I hope

* As luxury prevailed among the Romans, avarice, its sure attendant, increased in proportion; and, among other base methods of gratifying the importunate demands of unbounded desires, the mean practice of paying court to the wealthy, with a view to their fortunes, was extremely common. Horace has exposed this contemptible commerce in his usual agreeable manner, and recommends it as the most infallible method of becoming rich:

. . . . '*Unde*
Divitias aerisque ruam, dic, augur, acervos.'
'*Dixi equidem, et dico: captes astutus ubique*
Testamenta senum; neu, si vafer unus et alter
Insidiatorem praeroso fugerit hamo,
Aut spem deponas, aut artem, illusus, omittas.'
Hor. Sat. ii. 5. *M.*

TRANSLATION.

U. 'Go on, most worthy augur, and unfold
The arts whereby to pile up heaps of gold.'
T. 'Well I have told you, and I tell you still;
Lay steady siege to a rich dotard's will;
Nor, should a fish or two gnaw round the bait,
And 'scape the hook, lose heart and give up straight.'
(Conington.)

and believe you will be consul in the approaching year, and in this persuasion I am confirmed both by your own eminent merit and the judgment of the emperor. Asinius Bassus, the eldest son of Rufus, solicits the quaestorship at the same time. I know not whether I ought to say (what however the father would have me both say and think, though Bassus himself is too modest to allow of such a notion) that he is a greater man than his father. Were I to represent his industry, his probity, his learning, his genius, his application, and his memory, as great as you will most certainly find them, you, who never yet suspected my veracity, would, not having seen him, scarcely believe me. I wish our age so abounded in men of good qualities as to supply you with some who might justly take precedence of him. In that case I should be the first to persuade and advise you to take a good look round and consider well where to fix your choice: but the misfortune is—however, I must not perch my friend up too high. I will only say that he is a young man, who deserves that you should look upon him in the same light in which our ancestors used to regard their quaestors, that is, as a son.* Men of your reputation for wisdom should receive children from the state such as you would desire nature to make your own to be. Will it not be an honour to your consulship to have a quaestor whose father has been praetor, and whose relations consuls, yet who, although but a youth himself, reflects back upon his family (and that too by their own confession) as much glory as he derives from them? Let me entreat you then to grant my request, in which, if I seem premature, I hope you will pardon me, when you consider, that in a place where everything is seized up by the man who can first get hold of it, it is staying much too late to wait till precisely the proper time: besides, there is a pleasure in the very anticipation of one's wishes. Allow Bassus then to revere you already as consul, and do you in your turn esteem him as your quaestor; and thus permit me, who have a most sincere affection for you both, to enjoy that twofold satisfaction: for, as you and Bassus

* The connection between a consul and his quaestor, &c., was considered, by the ancient Romans, as a tie of the strongest kind. Vid. Cic. in Verrem. *M.*

are so equally dear to me, that I shall employ all the power, industry, and interest I have, in promoting him, to whomsoever he may happen to be quaestor, and likewise in assisting your quaestor, whoever he shall be, so it will give me very great pleasure if my endeavours, and both the strength of my friendship and your consulship, should all unite in serving the same young man; in a word, if I may be supported in this solicitation by your assistance, in whose vote the senate will most willingly acquiesce, and to whose testimony they will give the greatest credit. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* VALERIUS PAULINUS.

Rejoice with me, my friend, not only upon my account, but your own, and that of the republic as well; for literature is still held in honour. Being lately engaged to plead a cause before the Court of the Hundred, the crowd was so great that I could not get to my place without crossing the tribunal* where the judges sat. And I have this pleasing circumstance to add further, that a young nobleman, having had his tunic† torn, an ordinary occurrence in a crowd, stood with his gown thrown over him, to hear me, and that during the seven hours I was speaking,‡ whilst my success more than counterbalanced the fatigue of so long a speech. So let us set to and not screen our own indolence under pretence of that of the public. Never, be very sure of that, will there be wanting hearers and readers, so long as we can only supply them with speakers and writers worth their attention. Farewell.

* The tribunal was a raised seat where the praetor sat: the judges were placed on each side, a little below him. Orrery.

† The tunic was a woollen garment, worn underneath the toga.

‡ Lord Orrery rather drily suggests here, that 'the young gentleman was detained, not by inclination but by necessity,' on account of the crowd about him, which was too great to allow him to stir. 'That eloquence,' he observes, 'must be very powerful that could confine a man of dress and parade, and could soften those passions which must infallibly arise, when his finery was not only disarranged but torn to pieces. I am afraid that Pliny flatters himself upon this occasion.'

LETTER XVII. *To* Asinius.

You advise me, nay you entreat me, to undertake, in her absence, the cause of Corellia, against C. Caecilius, consul elect. For your advice I am grateful, of your entreaty I really must complain; without the first, indeed, I should have been ignorant of this affair, but the last was unnecessary, as I need no solicitations to comply, where it would be ungenerous in me to refuse; for can I hesitate a moment to take upon myself the protection of a daughter of Corellius? It is true, indeed, though there is no particular intimacy between her adversary and myself, still we are upon good enough terms. It is also true that he is a person of rank, and one who has a high claim upon my especial regard, as destined to enter upon an office which I have had the honour to fill; and it is natural for a man to be desirous those dignities should be held in the highest esteem which he himself once possessed. Yet all these considerations appear indifferent and trifling when I reflect that it is the daughter of Corellius * whom I am to defend. The memory of that excellent person, than whom this age has not produced a man of greater dignity, rectitude, and acuteness, is indelibly imprinted upon my mind. My regard for him sprang from my admiration of the man, and, contrary to what is usually the case, my admiration increased upon a thorough knowledge of him, and indeed I did know him thoroughly, for he kept nothing back from me, whether gay or serious, sad or joyous. When I was but a youth, he esteemed, and (I will even venture to say) revered, me as if I had been his equal. When I solicited any post of honour, he supported me with his interest, and recommended me with his testimony; when I entered upon it, he was my introducer and my companion; when I exercised it, he was my guide and my counsellor. In a word, whenever my interest was concerned, he exerted himself, in spite of his weakness and declining years, with as much alacrity as though he were still young and lusty. In private, in public, and at court, how often has he advanced

* Corellius Rufus. See book i. letter xii.

and supported my credit and interest! It happened once that the conversation, in the presence of the emperor Nerva, turned upon the promising young men of that time, and several of the company present were pleased to mention me with applause; he sat for a little while silent, which gave what he said the greater weight; and then, with that air of dignity, to which you are no stranger, 'I must be reserved,' said he, 'in my praises of Pliny, because he does nothing without my advice.' By which single sentence he bestowed upon me more than my most extravagant wishes could aspire to, as he represented my conduct to be always such as wisdom must approve, since it was wholly under the direction of one of the wisest of men. Even in his last moments he said to his daughter (as she often mentions), 'I have in the course of a long life raised up many friends to you, but there are none in whom you may more assuredly confide than Pliny and Cornutus.' A circumstance I cannot reflect upon without being deeply sensible how incumbent it is upon me to endeavour not to disappoint the confidence so excellent a judge of human nature reposed in me. I shall therefore most readily give my assistance to Corellia in this affair, and willingly risk any displeasure I may incur by appearing in her behalf. Though I should imagine, if in the course of my pleadings I should find an opportunity to explain and enforce more fully and at large than the limits of a letter allow of the reasons I have here mentioned, upon which I rest at once my apology and my glory; her adversary (whose suit may perhaps, as you say, be entirely without precedent, as it is against a *woman**) will not only excuse, but approve, my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Arrius Antoninus.

Can I give you a stronger instance how much I admire your Greek epigrams than by having tried to imitate some of them in a Latin translation? I confess, however, (chiefly through my own incapacity, and partly again

* Alluding, perhaps, to some legal privilege attached to the sex by the jurisprudence of ancient Rome. *M.*

from the weakness or, as Lucretius styles it, *the poverty*,* of our native tongue,) decidedly to their disadvantage. Yet, if clothed in a Roman dress, and by my unskilful hand, you should be able to discover some lingering beauty in them still, what must be their inherent charm when published by yourself and in the Greek language? Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* Hispulla.

As you are a model of all virtue, and loved your late excellent brother, who had such a fondness for you, with an affection equal to his own; regarding too his daughter † as your child, not only shewing her an aunt's tenderness but supplying the place of the parent she had lost; I know it will give you the greatest pleasure and joy to hear that she proves worthy of her father, her grandfather, and yourself. She possesses an excellent understanding together with a consummate prudence, and gives the strongest evidence of the purity of her heart by her fondness of her husband. Her affection for me, moreover, has given her a taste for books, and my productions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even in getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full of tender anxiety is she when I am going to speak in any case, how rejoiced she feels when it is got through. While I am pleading, she stations persons to inform her from time to time how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the case. When I recite my works at any time, she conceals herself behind some

* '*Nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur Homoeomerian,*
Quam Grai memorant, nec nostra dicere lingua
Concedit nobis patrii sermonis egestas.'
Lucret. book i. *vv.* 830-83.

TRANSLATION.

'Next let's examine with a curious eye,
Anaxagoras's philosophy;
By copious *Greece*, term'd *Homoeomery*.
For which our *Latin* language, poor in words,
Not one expressive single voice affords.'
(Creech.)

† Calpurnia, Pliny's wife.

curtain, and drinks in my praises with greedy ears. She sings my verses too, adapting them to her lyre, with no other master but love, that best of instructors, for her guide. From these happy circumstances I derive my surest hopes, that the harmony between us will increase with our days, and be as lasting as our lives. For it is not my youth or person, which time gradually impairs; it is my honour and glory that she cares for. But what less could be expected from one who was trained by your hands, and formed by your instructions; who was early familiarized under your roof with all that is pure and virtuous, and who learnt to love me first through your praises? And as you revered my mother with all the respect due even to a parent, so you kindly directed and encouraged my tender years, presaging from that early period all that my wife now fondly imagines I really am. Accept therefore of our mutual thanks, mine, for your giving me her, hers for your giving her me: for you have chosen us out, as it were, for each other. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* NONIUS MAXIMUS.

I have already told you my opinion of the several parts of your work, as I read them through; I must now let you have my general opinion of the whole. It is a beautiful piece; the sentiments are manly and sublime, conceived in all the variety of a strong and pregnant imagination, expressed in chaste and elegant language; the figures happily chosen, and a copious vein of eloquence runs through the whole, giving a very high idea of the author's talents. You seem impelled by the energy of a powerful genius, actuated by deep sorrow, mutually assisting and heightening each other; for your genius imparts majesty and sublimity to your grief, while your grief adds strength and poignancy to your genius. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* VELIUS CEREALIS.

How sad and bitter a fate has attended the daughters of Helvidius! These two sisters are both dead in child-

bed, after having each of them been delivered of a girl. This misfortune pierces me with the deepest sorrow; I cannot too greatly lament it. It seems so unspeakably sad to see two such virtuous young ladies fall a sacrifice to their fruitfulness in the prime and flower of their years. I lament the unhappy condition of the poor infants, who are thus become orphans from their birth, I lament for the sake of the excellent husbands of these ladies, and I lament too for my own. The affection I bear the memory of their dead father is inviolable, as my defence * of him in the senate, and all my writings, will witness for me. Of three children which survived him there now remains but one; and his family, that lately had so many noble supports, rests and stays only upon a single person! It will, however, be a great mitigation of my affliction if fortune shall kindly spare that *one*, and render him worthy of his father and grandfather:† and I am so much the more anxious for his welfare and good conduct as he is the only remaining branch of the family. You know the softness and solicitude of my heart where I have any tender attachments: you must not wonder then that I have many fears, where I have great hopes. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* Sempronius Rufus.

I lately attended our excellent emperor,‡ as one of his assessors, in a case where he himself presided. A certain person left by his will a fund for the establishment of the

* See book ix. letter xiii.

† The famous Helvidius Priscus, who signalized himself in the senate by the freedom of his speeches in favour of liberty, during the reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. In the reign of the latter he was put to death, by the order of the senate, though contrary to the inclination of the emperor, who countermanded the execution; but it was too late, the executioner having performed his office before the messenger arrived. Tacitus represents him as acting, in all the various duties of social life, with one consistent tenor of uniform virtue; superior to all temptations of wealth, of inflexible integrity, and unbroken fortitude. Hist. lib. iv. 5. *M.*

‡ Trajan.

gymnastic games * at Vienna.† These my worthy friend Trebonius Rufinus, when he exercised the office of duumvir,‡ had ordered the total abolition of; and it was now alleged against him that he had no legal authority for their suppression. He pleaded his own cause with a success equal to his great eloquence; and what particularly recommended his speech was his judicious and impressive manner of delivery, as became a true Roman and a good citizen, rising up in his own justification. When the sentiments of the assessors were taken, Junius Mauricus (who in resolution and integrity has no superior) declared it as his opinion that the liberty of solemnizing these games ought not to be restored to the people of Vienna; 'And would to heaven,' added he, 'they could be abolished at Rome, too!'§ This, you will say, was very bold and resolute in him: but it is nothing uncommon in Mauricus. He gave as strong a proof of his honest freedom before the late emperor Nerva. Being at supper one evening with that prince and a few select friends, Veiento ‖ was reclining next the emperor, and on his bosom. My merely naming the man is enough for you. The discourse happened to turn upon Catullus Messalinus,¶ who, being without eyesight, had added to a cruel disposition the

* So called, because the persons who performed in the games were naked. They consisted principally of running, wrestling, and boxing. *M.*

† Vienne, near Lyons.

‡ The *duumviri*, so called from their number being only two, were magistrates in the corporate cities, who exercised, in their respective corporations, the same functions as the consuls at Rome; they were chosen out of the body of *decuriones*, who were a kind of senators. Sigonius de jure Ital. lib. iii. iv. *M.*

§ Trajan was very fond of these entertainments, and had himself exhibited some very splendid ones, upon his triumph over the Dacians. *M.*

‖ An infamous sycophant, frequently mentioned by Juvenal. *M.*

¶ 'Juvenal (iv. 113) calls him a caecus adulator. He was one of the most infamous of the "delatores" in Domitian's time, and as such is alluded to by Tacitus, Agr. 45. As governor of Cyrenaica, known also as the Libyan Pentapolis, he was guilty of atrocious cruelties towards the Jewish inhabitants, which, according to Josephus (De Bello Judaico, 7) he expiated by a miserable death. When it is said that "to a cruel disposition he added the evils of blindness," Pliny's meaning is, that his cruelty was intensified by the circumstance of his

evils of blindness. A stranger to either fear, shame, or compassion, he was very frequently hurled by Domitian (like a dart, which flies without sight or caution) against every man of worth. The company gave their opinion, over the supper-table, of the wickedness and sanguinary counsels of this man. 'And what,' said the emperor, 'would have been his fate, had he lived now?' 'To have supped with us,'* returned Mauricus. But to come back from this long digression into which, however, I did not fall undesignedly. It was determined that these games should be suppressed, for they had greatly depraved the morals of the people of Vienna, just as ours have those of the world at large. For the vices of the Viennenses are confined within their own walls, ours have a more extensive influence, and it is in the body politic, as in the natural, those disorders are most dangerous that flow from the head. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII. *To* Pomponius Bassus.

I had the great pleasure of hearing from our common friends that you take your leisure and lay it out as a man of your good sense ought; living down in a charming part of the country and varying your amusements—sometimes driving, sometimes going out for a sail, holding frequent learned discussions and conferences, reading a good deal and, in a word, daily increasing that fund of knowledge you already possess. This is to grow old in a way worthy of one who has discharged the highest offices both civil and military, and who gave himself up entirely to the service of the state, while it became him to do so. Our morning and mid-day of life we owe to our country, but our declining age is due to ourselves; as the laws themselves seem to suggest, which consign us to retire-

blindness; consequently he was a "stranger to fear, to shame, to compassion," emotions which blindness makes it physically impossible to exhibit.' (Church and Brodribb.)

* This was said in sarcastic allusion to Nerva's very mild and tolerant disposition which seems almost to have amounted to what Aristotle calls ἀοργησία. (Church and Brodribb.)

ment after we have passed our sixtieth year.* How do I long for the time when I shall enjoy that happy privilege! When my years will justify my following the example of your honourable retreat! When my retirement shall not be deemed indolence, but repose! Farewell.

LETTER XXIV. *To* FABIUS VALENS.

Being engaged only lately in a case before the Hundred Court, it occurred to me that when I was a youth I was also concerned in one which came on before the same tribunal. I could not forbear, as usual, to pursue the reflection, and to consider whether there were any of those advocates then present, who had been my fellow-pleaders in the former case; but I found I was the only person remaining who had been counsel in both: such changes the instability of human nature or the vicissitudes of fortune, effect! Death had removed some, banishment others; age and infirmity had silenced those, whilst th se were withdrawn to enjoy the happiness of retirement; *one* was at the head of an army; and the prince's favour had exempted *another* from the burden of civil employments. What ups and downs of fortune have I experienced even in my own person! It was the cultivation of my talents for oratory that first brought me forward into notice; it was the same talents that afterwards imperilled me; and it is these same talents that have advanced me again. The friendships of the wise and good, at my first appearance, did me great service; the same friendships proved afterwards extremely prejudicial to my interest, and *now* they are doing me good service again. If you compute the time in which these revolutions have happened, it is but a few years; if you number the incidents, it seems an age. And it is a lesson that will teach us to check both our despair and our presumption, when we observe such a variety of events rapidly revolving in so narrow a circle. It is my custom to communicate to my friend all my thoughts, and to set before

* A senator was not obliged to attend the business of the house after that age. Seneca de Civ. vit. c. xx. *M.*

him the same reflections and examples, by which I regulate my own conduct: and such is the purpose of the present letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXV. *To* Messius Maximus.

I mentioned to you in a former letter* that I apprehended the method of voting by ballot would be attended with inconveniences, and so it has proved. At the last election of magistrates, upon some of the tablets were written several pieces of pleasantry, and even indecencies: in one particularly, instead of the name of the candidate, were inserted the names of those who espoused his interest. The senate was extremely exasperated at this insolence, and clamorously implored the incensed emperor† to punish the author of it. But he, whoever he was, disappointed them, remaining concealed, and possibly might be in the number of those who expressed the warmest indignation. What must one think of such a man's private conduct, who in public, upon so important an occasion, and at so serious a time, could indulge himself in such scurrilous liberties, and, in fact, venture to play wit, humorist, and smart fellow, all at once, in the face of the senate? 'Who will find out?' is the argument that emboldens little and base minds to act in this way. This man asked for the tablets, took the pen, and held his head down to write, fearing no one, and without a grain of self-respect. This is how these buffooneries, which are only fit for the stage, arise. What course shall we take, what remedy shall we apply against this abuse? Everywhere our disorders are too strong for the remedies. 'But all these will be taken care of by one above us,' who by these impotent but daring insults has daily fresh occasions found him of exerting all his pains and vigilance. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI. *To* Nepos.

Your request that I would revise and correct that copy of my works which you have taken the pains to collect, I

* Book iii. letter xx. † Trajan.

shall most willingly comply with, indeed nothing ought to give me greater pleasure to undertake, especially at your instance. When a man of such weight, learning, and eloquence, deeply engaged in business, and about to enter upon the government of a most important province, has so high an opinion of my writings as to think them worth taking with him, what pains ought I not to take to prevent this part of his luggage seeming a useless incumbrance! My first care therefore shall be to make these companions as pleasant to you as possible, and my next, to supply you on your return with others, which you may feel inclined to add to the former; for to have such a reader as you affords me no light encouragement to increase the number of my writings. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII. *To* POMPEIUS FALCO.

I have been attending these three days Augurinus's recital, which I heard not only with great pleasure, but even admiration. He calls his pieces sonnets. There is a good deal of writing in the light and graceful, the lofty, the gay, the tender, the sweet, and the satirical vein. I am of opinion there has not for these many years appeared anything more finished, of the kind, if indeed my great affection for him, and the praises he bestows upon me, do not bias my judgment. He introduces his poems with observing, that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses. If I can recollect the second line of this introduction (for the rest I remember, and have often repeated) you shall judge if my opinion of them is just:

'Sweetly flow my modest lays,
Like Calvus' or Catullus' strains,
(Bards approv'd of ancient days!)
Where love in all its softness reigns.

'Yet wherefore ancient poets name?
Let Pliny my example be:
Him the sacred nine inflame;
More than ancient poets he!

'To mutual love he tunes the lay,
While far the noisy bar he flies:
Say then, ye grave, ye formal, say
Who shall gentle love despise?'

You observe the point, the appropriateness, the expressiveness, of the whole, and I will venture to assure you you will find the entire book of this flavour; I will send it to you as soon as it shall be published. In the meanwhile admit this excellent youth into a share of your affection, and congratulate our age on the production of such a genius, set off by such virtues as his. He spends his time partly with Spurinna, and partly with Antoninus; he has the honour to be the relation of one, and the companion of both. You will easily form some idea of what uncommon virtues that youth must possess, who is thus the favourite of two such venerable old men: for the poet' observation is most indubitably true:

> 'Those who in close society are joined,
> In manners equal, you will ever find.' *

Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII. *To* Vibius Severus.

Herennius Severus, an eminent scholar, is exceedingly desirous of placing the pictures of two of your townsmen Cornelius Nepos and Titus Cassius, in his library; and has entreated me, if they are to be met with where you are (as they probably are to be) to get them copied and painted for him; a commission I charge you with rather than anybody else, not only because I know your friendship for me readily inclines you to comply with my requests, but as being sensible also of the high esteem and strong affection you have for learning and all her friends, and that your regard and veneration for those who have proved an ornament to your country are equal to that which you bear towards your country herself. I beg therefore you would employ as skilful a hand in this work as you can procure; for if it is difficult to catch a likeness from the life, it is much more so to preserve it in a copy; from which I desire you would not suffer the painter to deviate even for the better. Farewell.

* Euripides.

LETTER XXIX. *To* ROMATIUS FIRMUS.

Look here! The next time the court sits, you must, at all events, take your place there. In vain would your indolence repose itself under my protection, for there is no absenting oneself with impunity. Look at that severe, determined, praetor, Licinius Nepos, who fined even a senator for the same neglect! The senator pleaded his cause in person, but in suppliant tone. The fine, it is true, was remitted, but sore was his dismay, humble his intercession, and he had to ask pardon. 'All praetors are not so severe as that,' you will reply; you are mistaken—for though indeed to be the author and reviver of an example of this kind may be an act of severity, yet, once introduced, even lenity herself may follow the precedent. Farewell.

LETTER XXX. *To* LICINIUS SURA.

I have brought you as a little present out of the country a query which well deserves the consideration of your extensive knowledge. There is a spring which rises in a neighbouring mountain, and running among the rocks is received into a little banqueting-room, artificially formed for that purpose, from whence, after being detained a short time, it falls into the Larian lake.* The nature of this spring is extremely curious; it ebbs and flows regularly three times a day.† The increase and decrease is plainly visible, and exceedingly interesting to observe. You sit down by the side of the fountain, and while you are taking a repast and drinking its water, which is extremely cool, you see it gradually rise and fall. If you place a ring, or anything else at the bottom, when it is dry, the water creeps gradually up, first gently washing, finally covering

* See book i. letter iii. note.

† There are several of these periodical fountains in different parts of the world, as we have some in England. *Laywell*, near Torbay, is mentioned, in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 104, p. 909, to ebb and flow several times every hour. *M.*

it entirely, and then little by little subsides again. If you wait long enough, you may see it thus alternately advance and recede three successive times. Shall we say that some secret current of air stops and opens the fountain-head, first rushing in and checking the flow and then, driven back by the counter-resistance of the water, escaping again; as we see in bottles, and other vessels of that nature, where, there not being a free and open passage, though you turn their necks perpendicularly or obliquely downwards, yet, the outward air obstructing the vent, they discharge their contents as it were by starts? Or, may not this small collection of water be successively contracted and enlarged upon the same principle as the ebb and flow of the sea? Or, again, as those rivers which discharge themselves into the sea, meeting with contrary winds and the swell of the ocean, are forced back in their channels, so, in the same way, may there not be something that checks this fountain, for a time, in its progress? Or is there rather a certain reservoir that contains these waters in the bowels of the earth, and while it is recruiting its discharges, the stream in consequence flows more slowly and in less quantity, but, when it has collected its due measure, runs on again in its usual strength and fulness? Or lastly, is there I know not what kind of subterranean counterpoise, that throws up the water when the fountain is dry, and keeps it back when it is full? You, who are so well qualified for the enquiry, will examine into the causes of this wonderful phenomenon; it will be sufficient for me if I have given you an adequate description of it. Farewell.

BOOK V.

LETTER I. *To* Annius Severus.

A small legacy was lately left me, yet one more acceptable than a far larger bequest would have been. How more acceptable than a far larger one? In this way. Pomponia Gratilla, having disinherited her son Assidius Curianus, appointed me one of her heirs, and Sertorius Severus, of praetorian rank, together with several eminent Roman knights, co-heirs along with me. The son applied to me to give him my share of the inheritance, in order to use my name as an example to the rest of the joint-heirs, but offered at the same time to enter into a secret agreement to return me my proportion. I told him, it was by no means agreeable to my character to seem to act one way while in reality I was acting another, besides it was not quite honourable making presents to a man of his fortune, who had no children; in a word, this would not at all answer the purpose at which he was aiming, whereas, if I were to withdraw my claim, it might be of some service to him, and this I was ready and willing to do, if he could clearly prove to me that he was unjustly disinherited. 'Do then,' he said, 'be my arbitrator in this case.' After a short pause I answered him, 'I will, for I don't see why I should not have as good an opinion of my own impartial disinterestedness as you seem to have. But, mind, I am not to be prevailed upon to decide the point in question against your mother, if it should appear she had just reason for what she has done.' 'As you please,' he replied, 'which I am sure is always to act according to justice.' I called in, as my assistants, Corellius and Frontinus, two of the very best lawyers Rome at that time afforded. With these in attendance, I heard the case in my own chamber. Curianus said everything which he thought would favour his pretensions, to whom (there being nobody but myself

to defend the character of the deceased) I made a short reply; after which I retired with my friends to deliberate, and, being agreed upon our verdict, I said to him, 'Curianus, it is our opinion that your conduct has justly drawn upon you your mother's displeasure.' Sometime afterwards, Curianus commenced a suit in the Court of the Hundred against all the co-heirs except myself. The day appointed for the trial approaching, the rest of the co-heirs were anxious to cempromise the affair and have done with it, not out of any diffidence of their cause, but from a distrust of the times. They were apprehensive of what had happened to many others, happening to them, and that from a civil suit it might end in a criminal one, as there were some among them to whom the friendship of Gratilla and Rusticus * might be extremely prejudicial: they therefore desired me to go and talk with Curianus. We met in the temple of Concord; 'Now supposing,' I said, 'your mother had left you the fourth part of her estate, or even suppose she had made you sole heir, but had exhausted so much of the estate in legacies that there would not be more than a fourth part remaining to you, could you justly complain? You ought to be content, therefore, if, being absolutely disinherited as you are, the heirs are willing to relinquish to you a fourth part, which however I will increase by contributing my proportion. You know you did not commence any suit against me, and two years have now elapsed, which gives me legal and indisputable possession. But to induce you to agree to the proposals on the part of the other co-heirs, and that you may be no sufferer by the peculiar respect you shew me, I offer to advance my proportion with them.' The silent approval of my own conscience is not the only result out of this transaction; it has contributed also to the honour of my character. For it is this same Curianus who has left me the legacy I mentioned in the beginning of my letter, and I received it as a very notable mark of his approbation of my conduct, if I do not flatter myself. I have written and told you all this,

* Gratilla was the wife of Rusticus: Rusticus was put to death by Domitian, and Gratilla banished. It was a sufficient crime in the reign of that execrable prince to be even a friend of those who were obnoxious to him. See book vii. letter xxxiii. last note. *M.*

because in all my joys and sorrows I am wont to look upon you as myself, and I thought it would be unkind not to communicate to so tender a friend whatever occasions me a sensible gratification; for I am not philosopher enough to be indifferent, when I think I have acted like an honourable man, whether my actions meet with that approval which is in some sort their due. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* CALPURNIUS FLACCUS.

I have received those excellent thrushes,* for which I can find no equivalent, during this stormy weather, either from the Laurentine market or from the sea. A barren letter, bearing no proportion whatever to the favour I have received, is all the return you will get. I cannot even imitate the policy of Diomed,† in the exchange. But your good-nature will so much the more readily grant this idle letter a pardon, in that it confessedly does not deserve one. Farewell.

* These birds, of which there are several sorts, were in high reputation among the Romans, and generally had a place upon all elegant tables. *M.*

† Alluding to the story in Homer's Iliad, where Glaucus and Diomed having an interview between the two armies, they come to the knowledge of the friendship and hospitality which had formerly subsisted between their families; and Diomed proposes an exchange of their arms, as a token of reciprocal friendship:

Τευχεα δ' αλληλοις επαμειψομεν· οφρα και οἰδε
Γνωσιν, ὁτι, &c. Lib. 6, v. 230.

TRANSLATION.

'Now change we arms, and prove to either host,
We guard the friendship of the line we boast.
Thus having said—
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight,
Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resigned,
(Jove warm'd his bosom and enlarg'd his mind)
For Diomed's brass arms of mean device,
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price),
He gave his own of gold divinely wrought;
An hundred beeves the shining purchase bought.'
(Pope.) *M.*

LETTER III. *To* Titius Aristo.

Among the many agreeable and obliging instances I have received of your friendship, your not concealing from me the long conversation which lately took place at your house concerning my verses, and the various judgments passed upon them (which served to prolong the talk,) is by no means the least. There were some, it seems, who did not disapprove of my poems in themselves, but at the same time censured me in a free and friendly way, for employing myself in composing and reciting them. I am so far, however, from desiring to extenuate the charge that I willingly acknowledge myself still more deserving of it, and confess that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses of the gayer sort. I compose comedies, divert myself with pantomimes, read the lyric poets, and enter into the spirit of the most wanton muse, besides that, I indulge myself sometimes in laughter, mirth, and frolic, and, to sum up every kind of innocent relaxation in one word, *I am a man.* I am not in the least offended, though, at their low opinion of my morals, and that those who are ignorant of the fact that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of men have employed themselves in the same way, should be surprised at the tone of my writings: but from those who know what noble and numerous examples I follow, I shall, I am confident, easily obtain permission to err with those whom it is an honour to imitate, not only in their most serious occupations but their lightest trifings. Is it unbecoming *me* (I will not name any living example, lest I should seem to flatter), but is it unbecoming me to practise what became Tully, Calvus, Pollio, Messala, Hortensius, Brutus, Sulla, Catulus, Scaevola, Sulpitius, Varro, the Torquati, Memmius, Gaetulicus, Seneca, Lucceius, and, within our own memory, Verginius Rufus? But if the examples of private men are not sufficient to justify me, I can cite Julius Caesar, Augustus, Nerva, and Tiberius Caesar. I forbear to add Nero to the catalogue, though I am aware that what is practised by the worst of men does not therefore degenerate into wrong: on the contrary, it still maintains its credit, if frequently countenanced by the best. In

that number, Virgil, Cornelius Nepos, and prior to these, Ennius and Attius, justly deserve the most distinguished place. These last indeed were not senators, but goodness knows no distinction of rank or title. I recite my works, it is true, and in this instance I am not sure I can support myself by their examples. They, perhaps, might be satisfied with their own judgment, but I have too humble an opinion of mine to suppose my compositions perfect, because they appear so to my own mind. My reasons then for reciting are, that, for one thing, there is a certain deference for one's audience, which excites a somewhat more vigorous application, and then again, I have by this means an opportunity of settling any doubts I may have concerning my performance, by observing the general opinion of the audience. In a word, I have the advantage of receiving different hints from different persons: and although they should not declare their meaning in express terms, yet the expression of the countenance, the movement of the head, the eyes, the motion of a hand, a whisper, or even silence itself will easily distinguish their real opinion from the language of politeness. And so if any one of my audience should have the curiosity to read over the same performance which he heard me read, he may find several things altered or omitted, and perhaps too upon *his* particular judgment, though he did not say a single word to me. But I am not defending my conduct in this particular, as if I had actually recited my works in public, and not in my own house before my friends, a numerous appearance of whom has upon many occasions been held an honour, but never, surely, a reproach. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* JULIUS VALERIANUS.

The fact which I am about to mention, although in itself of no great importance, may be attended with very considerable consequences. Sollers, a person of praetorian rank, petitioned the senate for leave to hold a fair upon his estate. He was opposed in this by the deputies from the Vicentini,* who employed Tuscilius Nominatus as their

* Of Vicenza, a city in the territories of Venice. *M.*

counsel. The case was adjourned; and at the next meeting the deputies appeared unattended by their counsel, complaining that they had been *grossly deceived:* an expression which, whether it dropped from them in the warmth of resentment, or that they really had reason to think themselves so, I will not determine. Nepos, the praetor, asked them who it was they had retained? They replied, the same person who was counsel for them before. Being asked again whether he had appeared for them on that occasion without any gratuity? they informed the house that they had given him six thousand sesterces,* and on being asked further whether they had given him anything besides, they said, a second fee of one thousand denarii.† Upon which, Nepos moved that Nominatus should be ordered to attend. And this is all that was done in the affair that day, but, unless I am greatly mistaken, the enquiry will not end there; for one may observe in instances enough, that the slightest sparks have kindled a train of very unlooked-for results. And now, I have raised your curiosity I suppose sufficiently to make you try and coax the rest out of me, unless you should choose to anticipate the information by coming down at once, all eagerness, to Rome, preferring seeing the sequel to reading it. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Nonius Maximus.

I am deeply afflicted with the news I have received of the death of Fannius; in the first place, because I loved one so eloquent and refined, in the next, because I was accustomed to be guided by his judgment—and indeed he possessed great natural acuteness, improved by practice, rendering him able to see a thing in an instant. There are some circumstances about his death, which aggravate my concern. He left behind him a will which had been made a considerable time before his decease, by which it happens that his estate is fallen into the hands of those who had incurred his displeasure, whilst his greatest favourites are

* About £50. † About £35.

excluded. But what I particularly regret is, that he has left unfinished a very noble work in which he was employed. Notwithstanding his full practice at the bar, he had begun a history of those persons who were put to death or banished by Nero, and completed three books of it. They are written with great elegance and precision, the style is pure, and preserves a proper medium between the plain narrative and the historical: and as they were very favourably received by the public, he was the more desirous of being able to finish the rest. The hand of death is ever, in my opinion, too untimely and sudden when it falls upon such as are employed in some immortal work. The sons of sensuality, who have no outlook beyond the present hour, put an end every day to all motives for living, but those who look forward to posterity, and endeavour to transmit their names with honour to future generations by their works,—to such, death is always immature, as it still snatches them from amidst some unfinished design. Fannius, long before his death, had a presentiment of what has happened: he dreamed one night that as he was lying on his couch, in an undress, all ready for his work, and with his desk,* as usual, in front of him, Nero entered, and placing himself by his side, took up the three first books of this history, which he read through and then departed. This dream greatly alarmed him, and he regarded it as an intimation, that he should not carry on his history any farther than Nero had read, and so the event has proved. I cannot reflect upon this accident without lamenting that he was prevented from accomplishing a work which had cost him so many toilsome vigils, as it suggests to me, at the same time, reflections on my own mortality, and the fate of my writings: and I am persuaded the same apprehensions alarm you for those in which you are at present employed. Let us then, my friend, while life permits, exert all our endeavours, that death, whenever it arrives, may find as little as possible to destroy. Farewell.

* In the original, *scrinium*, a box for holding MSS.

LETTER VI. *To* Domitius Apollinaris.

The kind concern you expressed on hearing of my design to pass the summer at my villa in Tuscany,* and your obliging endeavours to dissuade me from going to a place which you think unhealthy, are extremely pleasing to me. It is quite true indeed that the air of that part of Tuscany which lies towards the coast is thick and unwholesome: but my house stands at a good distance from the sea, under one of the Apennines which are singularly healthy. But, to relieve you from all anxiety on my account, I will give you a description of the temperature of the climate, the situation of the country, and the beauty of my villa, which, I am persuaded, you will hear with as much pleasure as I shall take in giving it. The air in winter is sharp and frosty, so that myrtles, olives, and trees of that kind which delight in constant warmth, will not flourish here; but the laurel thrives, and is remarkably beautiful, though now and then the cold kills it—though not oftener than it does in the neighbourhood of Rome. The summers are extraordinarily mild, and there is always a refreshing breeze, seldom high winds. This accounts for the number of old men we have about, you would see grandfathers and great-grandfathers of those now grown up to be young men, hear old stories and the dialect of our ancestors, and fancy yourself born in some former age were you to come here. The character of the country is exceedingly beautiful. Picture to yourself an immense amphitheatre, such as nature only could create. Before you lies a broad, extended plain bounded by a range of mountains, whose summits are covered with tall and ancient woods,

* This was Pliny's principal seat, lying about one hundred and fifty miles from Rome, where he usually resided in the summer season. The reader will observe, therefore, that he considers it in a very different manner from that of Laurentinum (his winter villa) both with respect to the situation and the house itself. Cluver, in his Geography, has placed this villa a little above Tifernum Tiberinum, now called Citta di Castello, where our author built a temple at his own expense. If, after having traversed this noble villa, the reader should be curious to know how Pliny disposed of his time, when he retired to it, he may turn to the 36th letter of the ninth book. *M.*

which are stocked with all kinks of game. The descending slopes of the mountains are planted with underwood, among which are a number of little risings with a rich soil, on which hardly a stone is to be found. In fruitfulness they are quite equal to a valley, and though their harvest is rather later, their crops are just as good. At the foot of these, on the mountain-side, the eye, wherever it turns, runs along one unbroken stretch of vineyards terminated by a belt of shrubs. Next you have meadows and the open plain. The arable land is so stiff that it is necessary to go over it nine times with the biggest oxen and the strongest ploughs. The meadows are bright with flowers, and produce trefoil and other kinds of herbage as fine and tender as if it were but just sprung up, for all the soil is refreshed by never-failing streams. But though there is plenty of water, there are no marshes; for the ground being on a slope, whatever water it receives without absorbing runs off into the Tiber. This river, which winds through the middle of the meadows, is navigable only in the winter and spring, at which seasons it transports the produce of the lands to Rome: but in summer it sinks below its banks, leaving the name of a great river to an almost empty channel: towards the autumn, however, it begins again to renew its claim to that title. You would be charmed by taking a view of this country from the top of one of our neighbouring mountains, and would fancy that not a real, but some imaginary landscape, painted by the most exquisite pencil, lay before you, such an harmonious variety of beautiful objects meets the eye, whichever way it turns. My house, although at the foot of a hill, commands as good a view as if it stood on its brow, yet you approach by so gentle and gradual a rise that you find yourself on high ground without perceiving you have been making an ascent. Behind, but at a great distance, is the Apennine range. In the calmest days we get cool breezes from that quarter, not sharp and cutting at all, being spent and broken by the long distance they have travelled. The greater part of the house has a southern aspect, and seems to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but rather earlier in the winter) into a broad and proportionately long portico, consisting of several rooms, par-

ticularly a court of antique fashion. In front of the portico is a sort of terrace, edged with box and shrubs cut into different shapes. You descend, from the terrace, by an easy slope adorned with the figures of animals in box, facing each other, to a lawn overspread with the soft, I had almost said the liquid, Acanthus:* this is surrounded by a walk † enclosed with evergreens, shaped into a variety of forms. Beyond it is the *gestatio*, laid out in the form of a circus ‡ running round the multiform box-hedge and the dwarf-trees, which are cut quite close. The whole is fenced in with a wall completely covered by box cut into steps all the way up to the top. On the outside of the wall lies a meadow that owes as many beauties to nature as all I have been describing *within* does to art; at the end of which are open plain and numerous other meadows and copses. From the extremity of the portico a large dining-room runs out, opening upon one end of the terrace; while from the windows there is a very extensive view over the meadows up into the country, and from these you also see the terrace and the projecting wing of the house together with the woods enclosing the adjacent hippodrome.§ Almost opposite the centre of the portico, and rather to the back, stands a summer-house, enclosing a small area shaded by four plane-trees, in the midst of

* Sir William Temple supposes the *Acanthus* of the ancients to be what we call *Pericanthe*. Modern botanists term it garden *bear's-foot*; but Mr. Castel, in his observations upon this passage, with more probability, imagines by its character here that it resembles moss. See note †, p. 158. *M.*

† This walk is called in the original *ambulatio*, as what I have ventured to translate a *terrace* is by Pliny termed *xystus*. The *ambulatio* seems to be what we properly call a walk; the *gestatio* was a place appropriated to taking of exercise in their vehicles, and the *xystus*, in its original signification, according to the definition given by Vitruvius, was a large portico wherein the athletic exercises were performed; though it is plainly used in this place for an open walk, ornamented much in the manner of our old-fashioned parterres; but its being raised above the walks which lay in the front seems to justify its being called a *terrace*. *M.*

‡ The *circus* was a place set apart for the celebration of several public games, particularly the chariot race. Its form was generally oblong, having a wall quite round with ranges of seats for the convenience of spectators. *M.*

§ A part of the garden, so called. See note *, p. 156. *M.*

which rises a marble fountain which gently plays upon the roots of the plane-trees and upon the grass-plots underneath them. This summer-house has a bed-room in it free from every sort of noise, and which the light itself cannot penetrate, together with a common dining-room I use when I have none but intimate friends with me. A second portico looks upon this little area, and has the same view as the other I have just been describing. There is, besides, another room, which, being situate close to the nearest plane-tree, enjoys a constant shade and green. Its sides are encrusted with carved marble up to the ceiling, while above the marble a foliage is painted with birds among the branches, which has an effect altogether as agreeable as that of the carving, at the foot of which a little fountain, playing through several small pipes into a vase it encloses, produces a most pleasing murmur. From a corner of the portico you enter a very large bed-chamber opposite the large dining-room, which from some of its windows has a view of the terrace, and from others, of the meadow, as those in the front look upon a cascade, which entertains at once both the eye and the ear; for the water, dashing from a great height, foams over the marble basin which receives it below. This room is extremely warm in winter, lying much exposed to the sun, and on a cloudy day the heat of an adjoining stove very well supplies his absence. Leaving this room, you pass through a good-sized, pleasant, undressing-room into the cold-bath-room, in which is a large gloomy bath: but if you are inclined to swim more at large, or in warmer water, in the middle of the area stands a wide basin for that purpose, and near it a reservoir from which you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again, if you should find you are too much relaxed by the warm. Adjoining the cold bath is one of a medium degree of heat, which enjoys the kindly warmth of the sun, but not so intensely as the hot bath, which projects farther. This last consists of three several compartments, each of different degrees of heat; the two former lie open to the full sun, the latter, though not much exposed to its heat, receives an equal share of its light. Over the undressing-room is built the tennis-court, which admits of different kinds of games and different sets of players.

Not far from the baths is the staircase leading to the enclosed portico, three rooms intervening. One of these looks out upon the little area with the four plane-trees round it, the other upon the meadows, and from the third you have a view of several vineyards, so that each has a different one, and looks towards a different point of the heavens. At the upper end of the enclosed portico, and indeed taken off from it, is a room that looks out upon the hippodrome, the vineyards, and the mountains; adjoining is a room which has a full exposure to the sun, especially in winter, and out of which runs another connecting the hippodrome with the house. This forms the front. On the side rises an enclosed portico, which not only looks out upon the vineyards, but seems almost to touch them. From the middle of this portico you enter a dining-room cooled by the wholesome breezes from the Apennine valleys: from the windows behind, which are extremely large, there is a close view of the vineyards, and from the folding doors through the summer portico. Along that side of the dining-room where there are no windows runs a private staircase for greater convenience in serving up when I give an entertainment; at the farther end is a sleeping-room with a look-out upon the vineyards, and (what is equally agreeable) the portico. Underneath this room is an enclosed portico resembling a grotto, which, enjoying in the midst of summer heats its own natural coolness, neither admits nor wants external air. After you have passed both these porticoes, at the end of the dining-room stands a third, which, according as the day is more or less advanced, serves either for winter or summer use. It leads to two different apartments, one containing four chambers, the other, three, which enjoy by turns both sun and shade. This arrangement of the different parts of my house is exceedingly pleasant, though it is not to be compared with the beauty of the hippodrome,* lying entirely open in the middle of the grounds, so that the eye, upon

* The *hippodromus*, in its proper signification, was a place, among the Grecians, set apart for horse-racing and other exercises of that kind. But it seems here to be nothing more than a particular walk, to which Pliny perhaps gave that name, from its bearing some resemblance in its form to the public places so called. *M.*

your first entrance, takes it in entire in one view. It is set round with plane-trees covered with ivy,* so that, while their tops flourish with their own green, towards the roots their verdure is borrowed from the ivy that twines round the trunk and branches, spreads from tree to tree, and connects them together. Between each plane-tree are planted box-trees, and behind these stands a grove of laurels which blend their shade with that of the planes. This straight boundary to the hippodrome alters its shape at the farther end, bending into a semi-circle, which is planted round, shut in with cypresses, and casts a deeper and gloomier shade, while the inner circular walks (for there are several), enjoying an open exposure, are filled with plenty of roses, and correct, by a very pleasant contrast, the coolness of the shade with the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these several winding alleys, you enter a straight walk,† which breaks out into a variety of others, partitioned off by box-row hedges. In one place you have a little meadow, in another the box is cut in a thousand different forms,‡ sometimes into letters,

* 'What the *Hederae* were that deserved a place in a garden,' says Sir William Temple, in his Essay on Gardening, 'I cannot guess, unless they had sorts of ivy unknown to us.' But it does not seem necessary to have recourse to that supposition; for there are two sorts among us, which are very beautiful plants, the one called the silver-striped ivy, the other the yellow variegated ivy. The former, perhaps, is the *pallentes Hederae* [1] of Virgil; which epithet some of the critics, not attending to the different kinds of ivy, have injudiciously changed to *palantes*. *M.*

† Here seems to begin what we properly call the *garden*, and is the only description of a *Roman* one which has come down to us. Virgil indeed mentions that of his Corycian friend's, but he only gives an account of the plants which that contented old man cultivated, without describing the form in which this little spot was laid out. *M.*

‡ It is very remarkable that this false taste in gardening, so justly rejected by modern improvements in that agreeable art, was introduced among the Romans at a time when one should little expect to meet with any inelegancies in the polite refinements of life. Marius, the friend of Julius Caesar, and peculiar favourite of Augustus (of whom there is still extant a letter to Cicero, greatly admired for the beauty of its sentiments and expression), is said to have first taught his countrymen this monstrous method of distorting nature by cutting trees into regular forms. Columel. l. 12. c. 44. *M.*

[1] Georg. 4.

expressing the master's name, sometimes the artificer's, whilst here and there rise little obelisks with fruit-trees alternately intermixed, and then on a sudden, in the midst of this elegant regularity, you are surprised with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature. In the centre of this lies a spot adorned with a knot of dwarf plane-trees.* Beyond these stands an acacia,† smooth and bending in places, then again various other shapes and names. At the upper end is an alcove of white marble,

* The plane-tree was extremely cultivated among the Romans upon account of its extraordinary shade, and they used to nourish it with wine [1] instead of water, believing (as an ingenious author [2] observes) 'This tree loved that liquor, as well as those who used to drink under its shade.' Virgil mentions it as *ministrantem—potantibus umbras.* Georg. 4. It was a favourite tree likewise among the Grecians:

Αυταρ εμοι γλυκυς ὑπνος ὑπο πλατανῳ βαθυφυλλῳ,
Και παγας φιλεοιμι τον εγγυθεν ηχον ακουειν.

Mosch. Idyl.

TRANSLATION.

Give me beneath the plane-tree's shade to lie,
While tinkling fountains sweetly murmur by.'

M.

† It is probable the Acanthus here mentioned is not the same plant as that described above; it is certain at least there were different sorts of them. It seems to be of the kind which Virgil speaks of in the 4th Georgic:

Aut flexi *tacuissem vimen Acanthi;*

whatever that was, which is by no means clear. The ingenious botanist mentioned before supposes it to be *Brank-ursine*, and that Dryden was mistaken in translating this passage:

. . . . The winding *Trail*
Of Bear's-foot. . . . .

For, says he, it is by no means a trailing plant. But there is reason, it should seem, to believe the contrary; for it is not very probable that Virgil should use the epithet *flexus* in allusion, as this gentleman imagines, to the story of the tile and the basket, which gave the first hint to the inventor of the Corinthian capital. It is much more likely and natural that he should join an epithet to Acanthus, which denoted a certain general quality attending it, than any foreign and accidental circumstance, especially one so extremely remote. And this conjecture seems to be strongly supported by Pliny's calling it *flexuosus.* *M.*

[1] Plin. Hist. Nat. [2] Sir William Temple.

shaded with vines and supported by four small Carystian * columns. From this semicircular couch, the water, gushing up through several little pipes, as though pressed out by the weight of the persons who recline themselves upon it, falls into a stone cistern underneath, from whence it is received into a fine polished marble basin, so skilfully contrived that it is always full without ever overflowing. When I sup here, this basin serves as a table, the larger sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of vessels and waterfowl. Opposite this is a fountain which is incessantly emptying and filling, for the water which it throws up to a great height, falling back again into it, is by means of consecutive apertures returned as fast as it is received. Facing the alcove (and reflecting upon it as great an ornament as it borrows from it) stands a summer-house of exquisite marble, the doors of which project and open into a green enclosure, while from its upper and lower windows the eye falls upon a variety of different greens. Next to this is a little private closet (which, though it seems distinct, may form part of the same room), furnished with a couch, and notwithstanding it has windows on every side, yet it enjoys a very agreeable gloom, by means of a spreading vine which climbs to the top, and entirely overshadows it. Here you may lie and fancy yourself in a wood, with this only difference, that you are not exposed to the weather as you would be there. Here too a fountain rises and instantly disappears—several marble seats are set in different places, which are as pleasant as the summer-house itself after one is tired out with walking. Near each seat is a little fountain, and throughout the whole hippodrome several small rills run murmuring along through pipes, wherever the hand of art has thought proper to conduct them, watering here and there different plots of green, and sometimes all parts at once. I should have ended before now, for fear of being too chatty, had I not proposed in this letter to lead you into every corner of my

* This marble came from Carystus (now called Caristo) in Euboea, an island in the Archipelago, which has since changed its name into *Negropont.* *M.*

house and gardens. Nor did I apprehend your thinking it a trouble to read the description of a place which I feel sure would please you were you to see it; especially as you can stop just when you please, and by throwing aside my letter, sit down as it were, and give yourself a rest as often as you think proper. Besides, I gave my little passion indulgence, for I have a passion for what I have built, or finished, myself. In a word, (for why should I conceal from my friend either my deliberate opinion or my prejudice?) I look upon it as the first duty of every writer to frequently glance over his title-page and consider well the subject he has proposed to himself; and he may be sure, if he dwells on his subject, he cannot justly be thought tedious, whereas if, on the contrary, he introduces and drags in anything irrelevant, he will be thought exceedingly so. Homer, you know, has employed many verses in the description of the arms of Achilles, as Virgil has also in those of Aeneas, yet neither of them is prolix, because they each keep within the limits of their original design. Aratus, you observe, is not considered too circumstantial, though he traces and enumerates the minutest stars, for he does not go out of his way for that purpose, but only follows where his subject leads him. In the same way (to compare small things with great), so long as, in endeavouring to give you an idea of my house, I have not introduced anything irrelevant or superfluous, it is not my letter which describes, but my villa which is described, that is to be considered large. But to return to where I began, lest I should justly be condemned by my own law, if I continue longer in this digression, you see now the reasons why I prefer my Tuscan villa to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tiber, and Praeneste.* Besides the advantages already mentioned, I enjoy here a cozier, more profound and undisturbed retirement than anywhere else, as I am at a greater distance from the business of the town and the interruption of troublesome clients. All is calm and composed; which circumstances contribute no less than its clear air and unclouded sky to

* Now called Frascati, Tivoli, and Palestrina, all of them situated in the Campagna di Roma, and at no great distance from Rome. M.

that health of body and mind I particularly enjoy in this place, both of which I keep in full swing by study and hunting. And indeed there is no place which agrees better with my family, at least I am sure I have not yet lost one (may the expression be allowed!*) of all those I brought here with me. And may the gods continue that happiness to *me*, and that honour to my *villa*. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* CALVISIUS.

It is certain the law does not allow a corporate city to inherit any estate by will, or to receive a legacy. Saturninus, however, who has appointed me his heir, had left a fourth part of his estate to our corporation of Comum; afterwards, instead of a fourth part, he bequeathed four hundred thousand sesterces.† This bequest, in the eye of the law, is null and void, but, considered as the clear and express will of the deceased, ought to stand firm and valid. Myself, I consider the will of the dead (though I am afraid what I say will not please the lawyers) of higher authority than the law, especially when the interest of one's native country is concerned. Ought I, who made them a present of eleven hundred thousand sesterces‡ out of my own patrimony, to withhold a benefaction of little more than a third part of that sum out of an estate which has come quite by a chance into my hands? You, who like a true patriot have the same affection for this our common country, will agree with me in opinion, I feel sure. I wish therefore you would, at the next meeting of the Decurii, acquaint them, just briefly and respectfully, as to how the law stands in this case, and then add that I offer them four hundred thousand sesterces according to the directions in Saturninus' will. You will represent this donation as *his* present and *his* liberality; I only claim the merit of complying with his request. I did not trouble to write to their senate about this, fully relying as I do upon our intimate friendship and your wise discretion, and

* 'This is said in allusion to the idea of Nemesis supposed to threaten excessive prosperity.' (Church and Brodribb.)

† About £3100. ‡ About £8600.

being quite satisfied that you are both able and willing to act for me upon this occasion as I would for myself; besides, I was afraid I should not seem to have so cautiously guarded my expressions in a letter as you will be able to do in a speech. The countenance, the gesture, and even the tone of voice govern and determine the sense of the speaker, whereas a letter, being without these advantages, is more liable to malignant misinterpretation. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Titinius Capito.

You urge me to write a history, and you are not the only one who so urges. Many of my friends have often advised me to do this, and I am quite willing to. Not in any confidence of my performance being a success (that would be too rashly presuming upon the event of an experiment which I have never yet made), but because it is to me a peculiarly noble work rescuing from oblivion those who deserve immortality, and extending their renown at the same time that we advance our own. Nothing, I confess, so strongly incites as the love and desire of a lasting name: a passion in every way worthy of the human breast, especially of a man who, being unconscious in himself of any ill-deed, is not afraid of being handed down to posterity. It is the continual subject therefore of my thoughts

'By what right means to raise my grovelling name,' *

So far suffices my ambition; what follows is beyond it,

'And rise by general voice to endless fame.'

'Yet oh!' † However, the first is sufficient, and the writing of history is perhaps the only means I can promise myself to acquire it with. For to oratory and poetry, unless of the highest degree of eloquence, little thanks are given, but history, in whatever manner executed, is always entertaining. Mankind are naturally inquisitive, and so easily

* Virgil, Georg. i. sub init.

† Part of a verse from the fifth Aeneid, where Menestheus, one of the competitors in the naval games, who was in some danger of being distanced, exhorts his men to exert their utmost vigour to prevent such a disgrace. *M.*

attracted by bare information of any sort that even idle gossip and stories will delight them. But, besides this, I have an example in my own family that inclines me to engage in a work of this kind; my uncle and father by adoption was an historian and a very conscientious one too,* and then the philosophers, you know, recommend us to tread in the steps of our ancestors when they have led the way before us, in the right path. Why do I hesitate, then? Well, you see, I have pleaded some very important causes, and (although not very sanguine about them) have determined to revise my speeches, lest, for want of this remaining labour, all the pains they have cost me should be thrown away, and they be buried in oblivion along with their author: for, with respect to posterity, the work that was never finished might as well have never been begun. 'You could revise your pleadings,' you will say, 'and write a history, at the same time.' I wish I could indeed! but they are each such important undertakings that either of them separately is abundantly sufficient for my powers. I was not more than nineteen when I first appeared at the bar, and yet it is only now at length I understand (and that but imperfectly still) what is essential to constitute a complete orator. How then shall I be able to support the additional weight of a fresh undertaking? History and oratory have, it is true, many points in common, yet still more divergencies, just where they seem to agree. Narration is common to them both, but narration of a distinct kind. The latter contents itself with trite, familiar, every-day matters of occurrence, while to the former belong questions of deep research, glowing and lofty incident—strength and sinew are sufficient in *that*, but vigour, richness, and flow, are essential to *this*: the excellency of the one consists in its strength and pungency, that of the other in a diffuseness, suavity, and even sweetness, of diction. In short, the words, the emphasis, the structure of the periods, are totally different in each. For, as Thucydides observes, it is of great consequence whether you have your reward in present, or whether you are still striving for it. The first remark is applicable to

* See book iii. letter v.

oratory, the second to history. For these reasons I am not inclined to mix up and confuse together two performances of such dissimilar natures, and in this case differing in such highly important respects, lest, bewildered by so vast an incongruity, I should introduce into the one what is only proper to the other. Therefore (to speak in our language of the bar) I must beg permission that the case be adjourned. Meanwhile just think over what especial period I ought to take up—shall it be those remote times which have been treated of already by others? In this way, indeed, the materials will be ready prepared to my hands, but the collating of the several historians will be a task of great labour. Or shall I only go over new and untrodden ground? Serious risk and scanty requital, this; for, in an age so overrun with vice, you will find infinitely more to condemn than approve of, yet your praise, though ever so lavish, will be deemed too sparing, and your censure, though ever so cautious, too severe. However, this does not at all discourage me, for I have courage enough in the cause of truth. I expect you, then, to prepare the way which you have pointed out to me, and to determine my subject, that when I shall be ready to enter upon the task you have assigned me, I may not be delayed by some new serious difficulty. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Saturninus.

Your letter affected me in various ways, containing as it did news partly joyous and partly sad. It gave me pleasure to hear you were detained in town; 'much against my own inclination,' you say; but not in the least against *mine*, since you assure me you remain there upon my account, and defer the recital of your work till my return, for which I am greatly obliged to you. But I was much concerned at that part of your letter which mentioned the dangerous illness of Julius Valens, though one cannot call it sad when one thinks of *him;* it must be best that he obtain as speedy a release as possible, by death, from a complaint of which there is no hope that he can

ever be cured. But what you tell me of Avitus; his dying on his return home from his quaestorship, on board ship, far away from a brother who was so fond of him, far away from his mother and his sisters, this is not merely sad news, it is very mournful news. These things, they cannot affect him now, yet they must have affected his last moments, they must affect those friends he has left behind. How severe is the reflection that so noble a youth should be cut off in his early bloom and snatched from those high honours to which his virtues, had they been permitted to attain their full maturity, would certainly have raised him! What a passion he had for literature! What a reader he was, and what a writer too! But the fruits of his labours are now perished with him, and for ever lost to posterity.—Yet why do I indulge my sorrow? which, once unbridled, never wants sufficient matter to go on upon. I will end my letter, to end the tears as well which yours has drawn from me. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Arrius Antoninus.

I am never more sensible of the superior excellence of your verses than when I try to imitate them. As the hand of the painter must always fail when perfect beauty sits for the picture, so I labour to catch the graces of my original, but still fall short of them. Let me earnestly entreat you, then, to continue to supply us with many more such excellent models, which every man must wish to imitate, but few, perhaps none, will ever be able to equal. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* Suetonius Tranquillus.

It is time you should acquit the promise my verses gave to our common friends, of your works. The world is every day impatiently inquiring after them, and there is some danger of their publication being forced upon you by legal proceedings. I am backward in publishing, myself, but you quite get the better of even me, in slowness

and procrastination. You must rouse yourself, then, otherwise the severity of my satire may perhaps extort from you what the blandishments of my gentler muse could not obtain. Your work is already arrived to that degree of perfection that the file can only weaken, not polish it. Allow me then the pleasure of seeing your name in the title-page of a book, and suffer the works of my dear Tranquillus to be recited and transcribed, to be bought and read. It is but fair, and agreeable to our mutual friendship, that you should give me in return the same pleasure you receive from me. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Calpurnius Fabatus (*his wife's grandfather*).

Your letter informs me that you have erected a noble public portico,* as a memorial of yourself and your son, and that the next day after the ceremony of opening it, you engaged to repair and beautify the gates of our city at your own charge: thus it is that you rise from one act of munificence to another! I take a part in everything that concerns your glory; which, from the alliance that subsists between us, in some degree redounds to mine; and am pleased to see the memory of my father in-law handed down to posterity by works of such distinguished beauty. I rejoice, too, at the honour that hereby arises to our native province; and as everything tending to her advantage is highly agreeable to me, by whatever hand conferred, so particularly when it is by yours. In conclusion I can only pray that heaven may continue to cherish in you

* These porticoes, which were carried to an extreme degree of magnificence, served for various uses: sometimes for the assembly of the senate, sometimes for stands of the most curious merchandize. But the general use they were put to was the pleasure of walking in them, like the present piazzas in Italy. (Fabric. Descript. Rom. c. xiii.) Here, likewise, works of genius were publicly recited, and the philosophers held their disputations. The famous Poecile Portico, or picture gallery at Athens, must have afforded the noblest scene of this kind imaginable to a lover of the imitative arts, Polygnotus, Panaenus, and all the great masters of that refined age, having contributed to embellish it with the finest productions of their pencils. Vid. Meursii Ath. At. l. i. c. v. *M*

this generous spirit, and to grant you many years in which to exert it; for your bounty, I am well persuaded, will not terminate here, but extend itself to farther acts of munificence. Generosity, when once set going, knows not how to stop; as the more familiar we are with the lovely form, the more enamoured we become of her charms. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* TERENTIUS SCAURUS.

Having thoughts of publishing a little speech which I have composed, I asked certain of my friends, whose judgment I respect, to its recital, and only a small number of these, so as to hear the truth. I have a twofold view in these rehearsals; one was that their anxiety for my success might quicken my endeavours, the other, that those errors which partiality to myself concealed from my own obversation may be pointed out to me. I succeeded in my design, and my friends obliged me very freely with their opinions, while I myself marked, besides, several passages capable of correction. I send you the piece, then, in its altered form. You will see what the subject is, from the title, and for the rest I refer you to the speech, which I hope you will so familiarize yourself with as not to find an explanatory preface necessary. I should like to hear your opinion of it both in general and in detail, for I shall either be more wary in suppressing or more resolved upon publishing it, according as your judgment shall either way incline. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* VALERIANUS.

You desire me to write and tell you (as I promised) what success attended Nepos in his accusation of Tuscilius Nominatus.* The latter, being brought before the senate, pleaded his own cause, though no person appeared to support the accusation. On the contrary, the deputies from the Vicentini were so far from attempting to prove their

* See letter iv. of this book.

charge that they favoured his defence. The sum of what he urged in his own behalf was: 'that it was his courage and not his integrity that had failed him; that he started with the intention of pleading the cause, and actually came into the senate for that purpose, but being discouraged by his friends, he withdrew; that they dissuaded him from persisting in opposing (especially in the senate) the inclinations of a senator, who did not contend so much for the fair itself as for his own credit and character; that if he should not desist, he would encounter far greater disfavour than in his former pleading.' (Indeed, on that occasion, there were some groans, though only from one or two, as he went out.) He proceeded to implore the clemency of the senate with many tears, prudently endeavouring throughout his whole speech (as he is a man of great ability and eloquence) to appear rather to sue for pardon than for justice. Afranius Dexter, the consul elect, moved for acquitting him; and the purport of his speech was to this effect: 'that Nominatus would have done better if he had gone through the cause of the Vicentini with the same resolution with which he had entered upon it: however, since it did not appear he had been guilty of this neglect with any fraudulent design, and that he had not been convicted of anything which merited public animadversion, it was his opinion he ought to be acquitted, on condition of his returning to the Vicentini whatever gratuity he had received from them.' This motion was approved by the whole senate with the exception of Flavius Asser: his opinion was, that he should be suspended from exercising the profession of an advocate during five years; and though he could not bring any over to his views, yet he obstinately persisted in them. He even compelled Dexter, who spoke first on the opposite side, to take an oath that he really thought the motion he had made was for the benefit of the republic; agreeably to a law which he produced concerning the assembling of the senate. But this, notwithstanding it was certainly legal, was opposed by some, who thought it a reflection upon Dexter, as if he had been unduly influenced in his opinion. But before the votes of the house were collected, Nigrinus, a tribune of the people, read a

very eloquent and impressive remonstrance, in which he strongly complained that the profession of the law was become venal, and that the advocates took money, even to betray the cause of their clients; that they made a shameful trade of their function: and instead of honour, which was formerly their only reward, they now lived upon the spoils of their fellow-citizens, from whom they received large and annual salaries. He gave the senate a summary account of the laws which had been made upon this subject, and reminded them likewise of their own decrees to the same purpose; he concluded with observing, that since both the authority of the laws and of the senate had been contemned, it was highly necessary to petition the emperor that he would be pleased himself to interpose, and provide some remedy against so great an evil. Accordingly, a few days after, an edict was published, drawn up with a proper admixture of mildness and severity; for which I refer you to the public register.* I cannot but congratulate myself upon this occasion that, in all the cases in which I have been concerned, I never made any bargain, or received any fee, reward, or even present whatsoever. One ought, no doubt, to avoid whatever is mean and unworthy, not so much because it is illegal as because it is dishonourable. But still there is great satisfaction in finding the legislature levelling its prohibitions against a practice which one never suffered oneself to follow. The credit indeed of my conduct may, or rather most certainly will, be considerably eclipsed, when this practice shall universally prevail by compulsion, which I always pursued by choice. In the mean time, however, I enjoy the pleasure of my friends' jokes, some telling me I certainly foresaw this edict, and others that it is an effectual check to my avarice and extortion. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* PONTIUS.

I had gone down to Comum when I heard that Cornutus Tertullus had accepted the surveyorship† of the Aemilian

* See book vii. letter xxxiii. p. 259, note.

† This was an office of great dignity among the Romans, and usually

Way. This news was inexpressibly agreeable to me, both upon his account and my own: upon his, because, although ambition ought to be (as it certainly is) far removed from his heart, yet it cannot but be acceptable to him to receive so great an honour without seeking it; upon mine, because it heightens the satisfaction which results from my own office,* to see such a man as Cornutus appointed to one of the same nature; for to be placed in the same rank with the good is a pleasure equal to being honoured with the highest dignities. And where indeed is there a better or more upright man than Cornutus, or whose conduct is a more express model of ancient manners? In this I do not found my judgment upon fame, which however, with great justice, speaks of him in the very highest terms; but upon long and thorough experience. We have ever been joined in the same friendships with the most shining characters of either sex, which this age has produced: a union that cemented our mutual amity. To these private ties were added those of a more public nature: he was my colleague in the treasury, as well as in the consulship, and in both offices I could not have had a fellow-worker more entirely after my own heart. These were opportunities of gaining a thorough insight into his character. I followed him therefore as a guide and revered him as a parent, not so much upon account of his age as his merit. Accordingly I congratulate myself quite as much as I do him, and upon a public as well as a private consideration, since virtue is now no longer, as formerly,† exposed to the most cruel

conferred upon those who had been consuls. Thus Caesar is mentioned by Plutarch as surveyor of the Appian Way. These roads extended to a great distance from the city on all sides, the most noble of which was the Appian, computed to reach three hundred and fifty miles. Mr. Wright, in his travels, speaking of this road, observes that, 'though it be much broken in several places, and travelling over it very bad, in others it is wonderfully well preserved, notwithstanding it be computed near two thousand years old. They are paved with such hard stones that they are rather polished than worn, and so well joined that in some places the whole breadth of the way seems one entire piece.' *M.*

* It appears by some ancient inscriptions still remaining that Pliny was surveyor of the River Tiber and its banks, to which office it is probable he here alludes. *M.*

† Alluding to the times of Nero and Domitian. *M.*

dangers, but advanced to the noblest dignities. But if I were to indulge the joy I feel upon this occasion, I should never have finished this letter. Let me turn then to an account of what I was doing when your messenger arrived. He found me with my wife's grandfather and aunt, together with several other friends, whose company I had not enjoyed for a considerable time: I was going round my grounds, hearing the complaints of the farmers, running over their tedious accounts, and had before me writings and letters far different from those to which my inclination early devoted me; in a word, I was preparing to return to Rome. For I have obtained but a short leave of absence; and indeed the news of this office being conferred on Cornutus reminds me to hasten to the duties of my own. I hope your favourite Campania will resign you about the same time, so that when I return to Rome, not a day may be lost to our social intercourse. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* MARCELLINUS.

I write this to you in the deepest sorrow: the youngest daughter of my friend Fundanus is dead! I have never seen a more cheerful and more loveable girl, or one who better deserved to have enjoyed a long, I had almost said an immortal, life! She was scarcely fourteen, and yet there was in her a wisdom far beyond her years, a matronly gravity united with girlish sweetness and virgin bashfulness. With what an endearing fondness did she hang on her father's neck! How affectionately and modestly she used to greet us his friends! With what a tender and deferential regard she used to treat her nurses, tutors, teachers, each in their respective offices! What an eager, industrious, intelligent, reader she was! She took few amusements, and those with caution. How self controlled, how patient, how brave, she was, under her last illness! She complied with all the directions of her physicians; she spoke cheerful, comforting words to her sister and her father; and when all her bodily strength was exhausted, the vigour of her mind sustained her. That indeed continued even to her last moments, unbroken by the pain of

a long illness, or the terrors of approaching death; and it is a reflection which makes us miss her, and grieve that she has gone from us, the more. O melancholy, untimely, loss, too truly! She was engaged to an excellent young man; the wedding-day was fixed, and we were all invited. How our joy has been turned into sorrow! I cannot express in words the inward pain I felt when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever finding out fresh circumstances to aggravate its affliction) ordering the money he had intended laying out upon clothes, pearls, and jewels for her marriage, to be employed in frankincense, ointments, and perfumes for her funeral. He is a man of great learning and good sense, who has applied himself from his earliest youth to the deeper studies and the fine arts, but all the maxims of fortitude which he has received from books, or advanced himself, he now absolutely rejects, and every other virtue of his heart gives place to all a parent's tenderness. You will excuse, you will even approve, his grief, when you consider what he has lost. He has lost a daughter who resembled him in his manners, as well as his person, and exactly copied out all her father. So, if you should think proper to write to him upon the subject of so reasonable a grief, let me remind you not to use the rougher arguments of consolation, and such as seem to carry a sort of reproof with them, but those of kind and sympathizing humanity. Time will render him more open to the dictates of reason: for as a fresh wound shrinks back from the hand of the surgeon, but by degrees submits to, and even seeks of its own accord the means of its cure, so a mind under the first impression of a misfortune shuns and rejects all consolations, but at length desires and is lulled by their gentle application. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* Spurinna.

Knowing, as I do, how much you admire the polite arts, and what satisfaction you take in seeing young men of quality pursue the steps of their ancestors, I seize this earliest opportunity of informing you that I went to-day to hear Calpurnius Piso read a beautiful and scholarly pro-

duction of his, entitled the Sports of Love. His numbers, which were elegiac, were tender, sweet, and flowing, at the same time that they occasionally rose to all the sublimity of diction which the nature of his subject required. He varied his style from the lofty to the simple, from the close to the copious, from the grave to the florid, with equal genius and judgment. These beauties were further recommended by a most harmonious voice; which a very becoming modesty rendered still more pleasing. A confusion and concern in the countenance of a speaker imparts a grace to all he utters; for diffidence, I know not how, is infinitely more engaging than assurance and self-sufficiency. I might mention several other circumstances to his advantage, which I am the more inclined to point out, as they are exceedingly striking in one of his age, and are most uncommon in a youth of his quality: but not to enter into a farther detail of his merit, I will only add that, when he had finished his poem, I embraced him very heartily, and being persuaded that nothing is a greater encouragement than applause, I exhorted him to go on as he had begun, and to shine out to posterity with the same glorious lustre, which was reflected upon him from his ancestors. I congratulated his excellent mother, and particularly his brother, who gained as much honour by the generous affection he manifested upon this occasion as Calpurnius did by his eloquence; so remarkable a solicitude he showed for him when he began to recite his poem, and so much pleasure in his success. May the gods grant me frequent occasions of giving you accounts of this nature! for I have a partiality to the age in which I live, and should rejoice to find it not barren of merit. I ardently wish, therefore, our young men of quality would have something else to show of honourable memorial in their houses than the images * of their ancestors. As for those which are placed in the mansion of these excellent youths, I now figure them to myself as silently applauding

* None had the right of using family pictures or statues but those whose ancestors or themselves had borne some of the highest dignities. So that the *jus imaginis* was much the same thing among the Romans as the right of bearing a coat of arms among us. Ken. Antiq. *M.*

and encouraging their pursuits, and (what is a sufficient degree of honour to both brothers) as recognizing their kindred. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Macer.

All is well with me, since it is so with you. You have your wife and son with you, and are enjoying the sea, the green fields, the running streams, and the elegancies of a most charming villa: for so I judge it to be, since *he** who was most happy ere fortune had raised him to what is generally esteemed the highest point of human felicity chose it for the place of his retirement. As for myself, I am employed at my Tuscan villa in hunting and studying, sometimes alternately, and sometimes both together;† but I am not yet able to determine in which of those pursuits it is most difficult to succeed. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* Paulinus.

As I know the humanity with which you treat your own servants, I have less reserve in confessing to you the indulgence I shew to mine. I have ever in my mind that line of Homer's—

'Who swayed his people with a father's love':‡

and this expression of ours, 'father of a family.' But were I harsher and harder than I really am by nature, the ill state of health of my freedman Zosimus (who has the stronger claim upon my tenderness, in that he now stands in more especial need of it) would be sufficient to soften me. He is a good, honest fellow, attentive in his services, and well-

* It is supposed by some commentators that Pliny alludes here to Nerva, who, being suspected by Domitian, was ordered by that emperor to retire to Tarentum, where, without any views of reigning he quietly sat down in the enjoyment of a private life. *M.*

† See book i. letter vi. and the note there.

‡ Odyss. l. v. 11.

read; but his chief talent, and indeed his distinguishing qualification, is that of a comedian, in which he highly excels. His pronunciation is distinct, correct in emphasis, pure, and graceful: he has a very skilled touch, too, upon the lyre, and performs with better execution than is necessary for one of his profession. To this I must add, he reads history, oratory, and poetry, as well as if these had been the sole objects of his study. I am the more particular in enumerating his qualifications, to let you see how many agreeable services I receive from this one servant alone. He is indeed endeared to me by the ties of a long affection, which are strengthened by the danger he is now in. For nature has so formed our hearts that nothing contributes more to incite and kindle affection than the fear of losing the object of it: a fear which I have suffered more than once on his account. Some years ago he strained himself so much by too strong an exertion of his voice that he spit blood, upon which account I sent him into Egypt;* from whence, after a long absence, he lately returned with great benefit to his health. But having again exerted himself for several days together beyond his strength, he was reminded of his former malady by a slight return of his cough, and a spitting of blood. For this reason I intend to send him to your farm at Forum-Julii,† having frequently heard you mention it as a healthy air, and recommend the milk of that place as very salutary in disorders of this nature. I beg you would give directions to your people to receive him into your house, and to supply him with whatever he may have occasion for: which will not be much, for he is so sparing and abstemious as not only to abstain from delicacies, but even to deny himself the necessaries his ill state of health requires. I shall furnish him towards his journey with what will be sufficient for one of his moderate requirements, who is coming under your roof. Farewell.

* The Roman physicians used to send their patients in consumptive cases into Egypt, particularly to Alexandria. *M.*

† Frejus, in Provence, the southern part of France. *M.*

LETTER XX. *To* Ursus.

Soon after the Bithynians had gone through with their prosecution of Julius Bassus, they also impeached their late governor Rufus Varenus; who only just before had been (and that too at their own request) appointed counsel for them against Bassus. Being introduced into the senate, they petitioned that an enquiry might be made into his conduct. Varenus, on the other hand, begged all proceedings might be stayed till he could send for the witnesses necessary to his defence; but this being opposed by the Bithynians, that point was debated. I was counsel (and no unsuccessful one) for Varenus; but whether a good one or not, you will judge when you read my speech. There is a great deal of chance in the pleadings on either side: readiness, voice, gesture, even the circumstance of time itself; in a word, the general disposition of the senate, as it is either favourable or adverse to the accused, all conspire to influence or diminish the success. But a speech read in a book has nothing to fear or hope from favour or prejudice, from lucky or unlucky accidents. Fonteius Magius, one of the Bithynians, replied to me with many words and little matter. It is the same way with many of the Greek orators, just as with himself, volubility is mistaken for copiousness, and they overwhelm you in one breath with a torrent, so to speak, of cold and lengthy periods.* Julius Candidus used to say, in his elegant way, that 'eloquence is one thing, loquacity another.' Eloquence indeed is the privilege of very few; or rather, if we believe Marcus Antonius, of none:† but that faculty

* This verbose and turgid style, which Pliny here condemns, Petronius likewise mentions with equal contempt, and represents it as having first begun to infect the purity of Attic eloquence about his time. These false species of oratory spread to Athens from Asia, where the swelling and highly figurative style has prevailed, from the earliest accounts we have of those people, to this day. Vid. Petron. Satir. sub init. *M.*

† The great masters among the ancients, in eloquence, as well as those in all the other fine arts, heated their imaginations with a certain ideal perfection, which as they could not explain in what it consisted, so neither, they owned, could they reach in their respective works. But however notional this supreme beauty, this *το πρέπον* and *decorum*, as

which Candidus calls *loquacity*, is common to numbers, and generally attends impudence. The next day Homulus spoke for Varenus with great skill, force, and elegance; to whom Nigrinus made a very concise, but pertinent and graceful, reply. It was the opinion of Acilius Rufus, the consul elect, that the Bithynians should be permitted to present their information; but he took no notice of the petition of Varenus; which was only another way of putting his negative upon it. Cornelius Priscus, formerly consul, was for granting the requests of both parties: and his opinion prevailed. Thus we gained our point; and though we had not the authority either of law or usage on our side, yet certainly the thing we insisted upon was perfectly equitable. Why so, I will not go into here, that you may be more impatient to turn to my speech. For if it be true, as Homer sings, that

> . . . . 'Novel lays attract our ravish'd ears;
> But old, the mind with inattention hears.' *

I must not suffer the intemperate *loquacity* of my letter to despoil my speech of its principal flower, by robbing it of that novelty which is, indeed, its chief recommendation. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* RUFUS.

I went into the Julian† court to hear those lawyers to whom, according to the last adjournment, I was to reply.

it was called, might be, yet it was productive of very real and substantial excellencies; and while the geniuses of the several artists were stretching after this flying form, they reached those glorious productions that have been the admired models to all succeeding ages. Agreeably to this high enthusiasm, Marcus Antonius, who bears a part in Tully's dialogue entitled 'The Orator,' says that in his earlier years he published a treatise upon that subject, wherein he asserted that, though he had known some few indeed who deserved to be called orators, in the popular sense of that word, yet he had met with none who had ever arrived at true *eloquence* (Vid. Tull. de Orat. lib. i.), and to that treatise Pliny, it is probable, here alludes. *M.*

* Pope's Odyss. book i. v. 446.

† A court of justice erected by Julius Caesar in the forum, and opposite to the basilica Aemilia.

The judges had taken their seats, the decemviri * were arrived, the eyes of the audience were fixed upon the counsel, and all was hushed silence and expectation, when a messenger arrived from the praetor, and the Hundred are at once dismissed and the case postponed; an accident extremely agreeable to me, who am never so well prepared but that I am glad of gaining further time. The occasion of the court's rising thus abruptly was a short edict of Nepos, the praetor for criminal causes, in which he directed all persons concerned as plaintiffs or defendants in any cause before him to take notice that he designed strictly to put in force the decree of the senate annexed to his edict. Which decree was expressed in the following words: ALL PERSONS WHOSOEVER THAT HAVE ANY LAW-SUITS DEPENDING ARE HEREBY REQUIRED AND COMMANDED, BEFORE ANY PROCEEDINGS BE HAD THEREON, TO TAKE AN OATH THAT THEY HAVE NOT GIVEN, PROMISED, OR ENGAGED TO GIVE, ANY FEE OR REWARD TO ANY ADVOCATE, UPON ACCOUNT OF HIS UNERTAKING THEIR CAUSE. In these terms, and many others equally full and express, the lawyers were prohibited to make their profession venal. However, after the case is decided, they are permitted to accept a gratuity of ten thousand sesterces.† The praetor for civil causes, being alarmed at this order of Nepos, gave us this unexpected holiday in order to take time to consider whether he should follow the example. Meanwhile the whole town is talking, and either approving or condemning this edict of Nepos. *We have got then at last* (say the latter with a sneer) *a redressor of abuses. But pray was there never a praetor before this man? Who is he then who sets up in this way for a public reformer?* Others, on the contrary, say, 'He has done perfectly right upon his entry into office; he has paid obedience to the laws; considered the decrees of the senate, repressed most indecent contracts, and will not suffer the most honourable of all professions to be debased

* The decemviri seem to have been magistrates for the administration of justice, subordinate to the praetors, who (to give the English reader a general notion of their office) may be termed lords chief justices, as the judges here mentioned were something in the nature of our juries. *M.*

† About £80.

into a sordid lucre traffic.' This is what one hears all around one; but which side may prevail, the event will shew. It is the usual method of the world (though a very unequitable rule of estimation) to pronounce an action either right or wrong, according as it is attended with good or ill success; in consequence of which you may hear the very same conduct attributed to zeal or folly, to liberty or licentiousness, upon different several occasions. Farewell.

BOOK VI.

LETTER I. *To* Tiro.

I did not miss you so much while you were in the country of the Piceni,* and I on the other side the Po,† as I find I do now that I am returned to Rome. Whether it be that the scenes where we used to associate remind me of you more keenly, or that the nearer we are to a friend, the more impatient we grow under the separation (our desires for a favourite object rising in proportion to our nearer approach towards it), I know not. But whatever the reason may be, do free me from my uneasiness. Come to me, or else I shall go back again into the country (which I left too quickly), were it only to make the experiment whether, on not finding me at Rome, you will write to me in the same sort of way. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Arrianus.

Sometimes I miss Regulus in our courts. I cannot say I deplore his loss. The man, it must be owned, highly respected his profession, grew pale with study and anxiety over it, and used to write out his speeches though he could not get them by heart. There was a practice he had of painting round his right or left eye,‡ and wearing a white patch§ over one side or the other of his forehead, according

* Ancona.

† At Comum.

‡ This silly piece of superstition seems to have been peculiar to Regulus, and not of any general practice; at least it is a custom of which we find no other mention in antiquity. *M.*

§ 'We gather from Martial that the wearing of these was not an unusual practice with fops and dandies. See Epig. ii. 29, in which he ridicules a certain Rufus, and hints that if you were to strip off the "splenia"' (plasters) 'from his face, you would find out that he was a branded runaway slave.' (Church and Brodribb.)

as he was to plead either for the plaintiff or defendant; of consulting the soothsayers upon the issue of an action; still, all this excessive superstition was really due to his extreme earnestness in his profession. And it was acceptable enough being concerned in the same cause with him, as he always obtained full indulgence in point of time, and never failed to get an audience together; for what could be more convenient than, under the protection of a liberty which you did not ask yourself, and all the odium of the arrangement resting with another, and before an audience which you had not the trouble of collecting, to speak on at your ease, and as long as you thought proper? Nevertheless Regulus did well in departing this life, though he would have done much better had he made his exit sooner. He might really have lived now without any danger to the public, in the reign of a prince under whom he would have had no opportunity of doing any harm. I need not scruple therefore, I think, to say I sometimes miss him: for since his death the custom has prevailed of not allowing, nor indeed of asking more than an hour or two to plead in, and sometimes not above half that time. The truth is, our advocates take more pleasure in finishing a cause than in defending it; and our judges had rather rise from the bench than sit upon it: such is their indolence, and such their indifference to the honour of eloquence and the interest of justice! But are we wiser than our ancestors? are we more equitable than the laws which grant so many hours and days and adjournments to a case? were our forefathers slow of apprehension, and dull beyond measure? and are we clearer of speech, quicker in our conceptions, or more scrupulous in our decisions, because we get over our causes in fewer hours than they took days? O Regulus! it was by zeal in your profession that you secured an advantage which is but rarely given to the highest integrity. As for myself, whenever I sit upon the bench (which is much oftener than I appear at the bar), I always give the advocates as much time as they require: for I look upon it as highly presuming to pretend to guess, before a case is heard, what time it will require, and to set limits to an affair before one is acquainted with its extent; especially as the first and most

sacred duty of a judge is patience, which constitutes an important part of justice. But this, it is objected, would give an opening to much superfluous matter: I grant it may; yet is it not better to hear too much than not to hear enough? Besides, how shall you know that what an advocate has farther to offer will be superfluous, until you have heard him? But this, and many other public abuses, will be best reserved for a conversation when we meet; for I know your affection to the commonwealth inclines you to wish that some means might be found out to check at least those grievances, which would now be very difficult absolutely to remove. But to return to affairs of private concern: I hope all goes well in your family; mine remains in its usual situation. The good which I enjoy grows more acceptable to me by its continuance; as habit renders me less sensible of the evils I suffer. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* VERUS.

I am much obliged to you for undertaking the care of that little farm I gave to my nurse.* It was worth, when I made her a present of it, an hundred thousand sesterces,† but the crops having since failed, it has sunk in its value: however, it will thrive again, I don't doubt, under your good management. But what I recommend to your attention is not so much the land itself (which yet I by no means except) as the interest of my particular benefaction; for it is not more her concern than mine to render it as advantageous as possible. Farewell.

* 'The nurses of the ancients were looked upon as a kind of second parent, and treated accordingly. In the early age of Homer, we find Euryclea, the nurse of Ulysses, represented as a woman of remarkable prudence, she bears a considerable part in the Odyssey, and her name always appears to advantage. Virgil, again, has bestowed an eternal monument upon the nurse of Aeneas; he begins his seventh book to her memory.' (Orrery.)

† About £780.

LETTER IV. *To* CALPURNIA *

Never was business more disagreeable to me than when it prevented me not only from accompanying you when you went into Campania† for your health, but from following you there soon after; for I want particularly to be with you now, that I may learn from my own eyes whether you are growing stronger and stouter, and whether the tranquillity, the amusements, and plenty of that charming country really agree with you. Were you in perfect health, yet I could ill support your absence; for even a moment's uncertainty of the welfare of those we tenderly love causes a feeling of suspense and anxiety: but now your sickness conspires with your absence to trouble me grievously with vague and various anxieties. I dread everything, fancy everything, and, as is natural to those who fear, conjure up the very that things I most dread. Let me the more earnestly entreat you then to think of my anxiety, and write to me every day, and even twice a day: I shall be more easy, at least while I am reading your letters, though when I have read them, I shall immediately feel my fears again. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* URSUS.

I told you in a former ‡ letter that Varenus had obtained leave of the senate to send for his witnesses. This was thought by many extremely equitable, though some others, with much obstinacy, maintained the contrary; particularly Licinius Nepos, who at the following assembly of the senate, when the house was upon other business, brought up this matter again after it had been settled, and made a long speech upon the last decree. He concluded with

* His wife.

† Where Fabatus, Calpurnia's grandfather, had a villa. This delightful country is celebrated by almost every classic author, and every modern traveller, for the fertility of its soil, the beauty of its landscape, and temperature of its air. '*Nihil mollius caelo,*' says Florus. '*nihil uberius solo; denique bis floribus vernat.*' L. i. 16. *M.*

‡ Book v. letter xx.

moving that the consuls might be desired to put the question whether it should please the senate for the future that, as in prosecutions founded upon the law concerning bribery and corruption, so in that relating to extortion, a clause should be added empowering the defendant, as well as the informer, to summon and examine witnesses. This speech of his displeased some of us, as peculiarly ill-timed: it seemed strange that Nepos should let slip the proper opportunity of animadverting upon the decree, when it was under the consideration of the senate; and raise objections to a decision after it had been determined, and which he might have opposed when it was in debate. Jubentius Celsus, the praetor, very warmly reproved him in a long speech, for presuming to correct the senate. Nepos answered him; Celsus replied; and neither of them was sparing of his reflections on the other.—But I forbear to repeat what I could not hear without regret: and am therefore so much the more displeased with some members of the senate, who ran from Nepos to Celsus, as one or the other was speaking, with the illiberal pleasure of listening to their mutual invectives; sometimes encouraging the one, sometimes the other; immediately afterwards seeming to reconcile them, and then again animating them to the attack, while frequently praying Caesar to be propitious to both, as though they had been present at some ludicrous public spectacle. And I could not observe without great concern that they were mutually informed what each intended to urge against the other; for Celsus replied to Nepos out of his memorandum book, as Nepos did to Celsus, from his notes. Such was the indiscretion of their friends that the two disputants knew each other's arguments in turn, just as if they had agreed upon them beforehand. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* Fundanus.

I never wished to see you in Rome more urgently than I do just now, and I entreat you therefore to come up here: for I want a friend to share with me in the labour and anxiety of an affair in which I am very warmly interested.

Julius Naso is a candidate for a post of honour: he has many competitors, and some of them of great merit; upon which account, as his success will be the more glorious, so it will be more difficult to secure. I am much divided between hope and fear, and the anxiety I feel upon this occasion is so great that I almost forget I am of consular rank, and fancy I have the whole field of dignities to run over again. This zeal is justly due to Naso, in return for his long affection for me. The friendship which I have for him did not, it is true, descend to him by inheritance, for his father and I were at too great a distance in point of age to admit of any intimacy between us; yet from my earliest youth I was taught to look up to the latter with the highest veneration. He was not only an admirer of the polite arts, but the patron of all who cultivated them, and used to go almost every day to hear Quinctilian and Nicetes, to whom I was at that time a disciple. He was, in short, a man of great worth and eminence, and one whose memory ought extremely to facilitate his son's advancement. But there are numbers in the senate who never knew his father; and though there are many, too, who were well acquainted with him, yet they are chiefly those who never extend their regards beyond the living. For this reason Naso, without relying upon the character of his father, which is likely to prove of more honour than service to him, must exert his utmost endeavours to recommend himself by his own merit; and, indeed, his conduct has ever been as guarded as if he had governed it with a particular view to the present occasion. He has acquired many friendships, and cultivated them with strict fidelity; and particularly singled me out for the object of his affection and imitation, from the first moment he was capable of forming any judgment of the world. Whenever I plead, he anxiously attends me, and is always of the party when I recite; as he is ever the first to enquire after my works as soon as they first appear. His brother had the same attachment to me.—But he has lately lost that excellent brother! and it shall be my part to supply his place. It is with grief I reflect upon the immature death of the one, as I lament that the other should be deprived of the assistance of so valuable a relation, and left to

depend entirely upon friends. For which reasons I insist upon your coming and joining your interest with mine. It will be of singular advantage to the cause in which I am embarked if you shew yourself, and accompany me; and such, I know, is your credit and influence that I am persuaded your doing so will render my applications more effectual, even with my own friends themselves. Break through, then, all obstacles that may lie in your way. My circumstances, my friendship, and my position, require this. I have undertaken to support Naso's interest, and it is well known that I do so; the pursuit and the risk therefore is become my own. In a word, if he obtains this post, all the honour will be his; but if he be rejected, the failure will be mine. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* Calpurnia.

You kindly tell me my absence very sensibly affects you, and that your only consolation is in conversing with my works, which you frequently substitute in my stead I am glad that you miss me; I am glad that you find some rest in these alleviations. In return, I read over your letters again and again, and am continually taking them up as if I had just received them; but, alas! this only stirs in me a keener longing for you; for how sweet must *her* conversation be whose letters have so many charms? Let me receive, them, however, as often as possible, notwithstanding there is still a mixture of pain in the pleasure they afford me. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Priscus.

You know Attilius Crescens, and you love him; who is there, indeed, of any rank or worth, that does not? For myself, I profess to have a friendship for him far exceeding ordinary attachments of the world. Our native towns are separated only by a day's journey; and we got to care for each other when we were very young; the season for passionate friendships. Ours improved by years; and so

far from being chilled, it was confirmed by our riper judgments, as those who know us best can witness. He takes pleasure in boasting everywhere of my friendship; as I do to let the world know that his reputation, his ease, and his interest are my peculiar concern. Insomuch that upon his expressing to me some apprehension of insolent treatment from a certain person who was entering upon the tribuneship of the people, I could not forbear answering,

> 'Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,
> To touch thy head no impious hand shall dare.' *

What is my object in telling you these things? Why, to shew you that I look upon every injury offered to Attilius as done to myself. 'But what is the object of all this?' you repeat. You must know then, Valerius Varus, at his death, owed Attilius a sum of money. Though I am on friends terms with Maximus, his heir, yet there is a closer friendship between him and you. I beg therefore, and entreat you by the affection you have for me, to take care that Attilius is not only paid the capital which is due to him, but all the long arrears of interest too. He neither covets the property of others nor neglects the care of his own; and as he is not engaged in any lucrative profession, he has nothing to depend upon but his own frugality: for as to literature, in which he greatly distinguishes himself, he pursues this merely from motives of pleasure and ambition. In such a situation, the slightest loss presses hard upon a man, and the more so because he has no opportunities of repairing any injury done to his fortune. Remove then, I entreat you, our uneasiness, and suffer me still to enjoy the pleasure of his wit and bonhommie; for I cannot bear to see the cheerfulness of my friend overclouded, whose mirth and good-humour dissipates every gloom of melancholy in myself. In short, you know what a pleasant entertaining fellow he is, and I hope you will not suffer any injury to engloom and embitter his disposition. You may judge by the warmth of his affection how severe his resentments would prove; for a generous and great mind can ill brook an injury when coupled with

* Hom. Il. lib. i. v. 88.

contempt. But though *he* could pass it over, yet cannot I: on the contrary, I shall regard it as a wrong and indignity done to myself, and resent it as one offered to my friend; that is, with double warmth. But, after all, why this air of threatening? rather let me end in the same style in which I began, namely, by begging, entreating you so to act in this affair that neither Attilius may have reason to imagine (which I am exceedingly anxious he should not) that I neglect his interest, nor that I may have occasion to charge you with carelessness of mine: as undoubtedly I shall not if you have the same regard for the latter as I have for the former. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Tacitus.

When you recommend Julius Naso to me respecting the office for which he is a candidate,* you are but recommending me to myself. However, I let it pass and forgive you, for I should have done the same had you been at Rome, and I absent. The tender anxiety of friendship is apt to imagine every circumstance to be material. Nevertheless, I advise you to address yourself to others, and be assured I will take a full share with you in all your applications in this affair, and support you with my best and warmest endeavours. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Albinus.

I was lately at Alsium,† where my mother-in-law has a villa which once belonged to Verginius Rufus.‡ The place renewed in my mind the sorrowful remembrance of that great and excellent man. He was extremely fond of this retirement, and used to call it *the nest of his old age.* Whichever way I looked, I missed him, I felt his absence. I had an inclination to visit his monument; but I repented

* A candidate for a public office was so called because he went about in the public offices, in a whitened (*candidata*) toga.

† Now Alzia, not far from Como.

‡ See an account of him in book ii. letter i.

having seen it, afterwards: for I found it still unfinished, and this, not from any difficulty residing in the work itself, for it is very plain, or rather indeed slight; but through the neglect of him to whose care it was entrusted. I could not see without a concern, mixed with indignation, the remains of a man, whose fame filled the whole world, lie for ten years after his death without an inscription, or a name. He had however directed that the divine and immortal action of his life should be recorded upon his tomb in the following lines:

> 'Here Rufus lies, who Vindex'* arms withstood,
> Not for himself, but for his country's good.'

But faithful friends are so rare, and the dead so soon forgotten, that we shall be obliged ourselves to build even our very tombs, and anticipate the office of our heirs. For who is there that has no reason to fear for himself what we see has happened to Verginius, whose eminence and distinction, while rendering such treatment more shameful, so, in the same way, make it more notorious? Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* MAXIMUS.

O what a happy day I lately spent! I was called by the prefect† of Rome, to assist him in a certain case, and had the pleasure of hearing two excellent young men, Fuscus Salinator and Numidius Quadratus, plead on the opposite sides: their worth is equal, and each of them will one day, I am persuaded, prove an ornament not only to the present age, but to literature itself. They evinced upon this occasion an admirable probity, supported by inflexible courage: their dress was decent, their elocution distinct, their tones were manly, their memory retentive,‡ their genius ele-

* See book ii. letter i. note.

† An officer whose functions answered in some sort to those of the lord mayor among us. He preceded all other city magistrates, having power to receive appeals from the inferior courts, and to decide almost all causes within the limits of Rome, or a hundred miles round. *M.*

‡ Retentiveness of memory seems to have been a quality highly esteemed among the Romans, Pliny often mentioning it when he draws the characters of his friends, as in the number of their most shining

vated, and guided by an equal solidity of judgment. I took infinite pleasure in observing them display these noble qualities; particularly as I had the satisfaction to see that, while they looked upon me as their guide and model, they appeared to the audience as my imitators and rivals. It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) which afforded me the most exquisite happiness, and which I shall ever distinguish with the fairest mark.* For what indeed could be either more pleasing to me on the public account than to observe two such noble youths building their fame and glory upon the polite arts; or more desirable upon my own than to be marked out as a worthy example to them in their pursuits of virtue? May the gods still grant me the continuance of that pleasure! And I implore the same gods, you are my witness, to make all these who think me deserving of imitation far better than I am. Farewell.

talents. And Quinctilian considers it as the measure of genius; '*tantum ingenii*,' says he, '*quantum memoriae*.' The extraordinary perfection in which some of the ancients are said to have possessed this useful faculty is almost incredible. Our author speaks in a former letter of a Greek philosopher of his acquaintance, who, after having delivered a long harangue extempore, would immediately repeat it again, without losing a single word.[1] Seneca says he could in his youth repeat two thousand names exactly in the same order they were read to him; and that, to try the strength of his memory, the audience who attended the same professor with himself would each of them give him a verse, which he would instantly repeat, beginning with the last, and so on to the first, to the amount of two hundred. He tells a pleasant story upon this occasion of a certain poet, who having recited a poem in public a person who was present claimed it for his own, and in proof of its being so repeated it word for word; which the real author was not capable of doing. [Sen. Controv. l. i. sub init.] Numberless instances might be collected from the ancients to the same purpose; to mention only a few more. It is said of Themistocles that he made himself master of the Persian language in a year's time; of Mithridates, that he understood as many languages as he commanded nations, that is, no less than twenty-two; of Cyrus, that he retained the names of every single soldier in his army. [Quinct. l. xi. 2.] But the finest compliment that ever was paid to a good memory is what Tully says of Julius Caesar, in his oration for Ligarius, that *he never forgot anything but an injury*. *M.*

* Alluding to a custom of the Romans, who marked the fortunate days in their calendar with white, and the unfortunate with black. *M.*

[1] See book i. letter iii

LETTER XII. *To* FABATUS.*

Most certainly you ought not to use any reserve in recommending to me those whom you judge worthy of your patronage, because nothing is more agreeable to your character than to be as extensively beneficial as possible; nor to mine than to interest myself in everything in which you are concerned. I shall give all the assistance, therefore, in my power to Vettius Priscus, especially in what relates to my peculiar province; I mean the Hundred Court.—You desire me to forget those letters which you wrote to me, you say, in the openness of your heart; but believe me, there are none I remember with more satisfaction. They are very pleasing proofs of the share I enjoy of your affection, since you use the same free expostulations with me that you would with your own son. And, to confess the truth, they are so much the more agreeable as I had nothing to accuse myself of upon your account; for I had most carefully performed your requests. I entreat you again and again still to rebuke me with the same freedom, whenever you imagine (and it will be only imagination, never really so) that I fail in my duty towards you: such a rebuke I shall understand as proceeding from your extreme affection for me, while you will be glad to find I did not deserve it. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* URSUS.

Was ever a man so troubled and persecuted as my friend Varenus, who has been obliged to enter into a fresh defence, and, as it were, to petition again for what he had, with much difficulty and contention, already obtained?† The Bithynians have had the assurance not only to criticise before the consuls, and endeavour to overthrow, the decree of the senate; but also to complain against it to the emperor, who happened to be absent when it was passed. Caesar referred them again to the senate, where they still persisted in their remonstrances. Claudius Capito, with

* His wife Calpurnia's grandfather. † See book v. letter xx.

more disrespect than courageous resolution, ventured to be counsel for them, undertaking to arraign the justice of a decree of the senate, in the face of that august assembly. Fronto Catius replied to him with firmness and dignity; as indeed the behaviour of the whole body in this affair was admirable. For even those who had opposed the petition of Varenus, when it was first brought before the house, thought that after it was granted, it ought not to be reversed. While the question indeed was under debate, each member was at liberty to have his own opinion; but once settled by the majority, they looked upon it then to be the common concern of each to support it. Acilius Rufus alone, and seven or eight others—no, only seven, now I come to think of it—held to their former vote. Among which small party there were some whose solemnity of demeanour, or rather affectation of it, for the time being, was rather ridiculed. You will judge from hence what a warm battle we are likely to have of it, since this prelude and preliminary skirmish, as I may call it, has occasioned so much contention. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* Mauricus.

You give me a pressing invitation down to your Formian villa. I will come, but only upon condition that you put yourself to no inconvenience upon my account; a condition which I shall also strictly observe on my part. It is not the pleasures of your sea and your coast; it is you, it is retirement, it is freedom, that I want to enjoy; otherwise I might as well remain in Rome: for there is no medium worth accepting between giving up your time wholly to the disposal of others, or reserving it entirely in one's own power; at least, for myself, I declare I can relish no mixtures of any kind. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* Romanus.

You were not present at a very singular occurrence here lately: neither was I, but the story reached me just after it had happened. Passienus Paulus, a Roman knight, of

good family, and a man of peculiar learning and culture besides, composes elegies, a talent which runs in the family, for Propertius is reckoned by him amongst his ancestors, as well as being his countryman. He was lately reciting a poem which began thus:

'Priscus, at thy command'—

Whereupon Javolenus Priscus, who happened to be present as a particular friend of the poet's, cried out—'But he is mistaken, I did not command him.' Think what laughter and merriment this occasioned. Priscus's wits, you must know, are reckoned rather unsound,* though he takes a share in public business, is summoned to consultations, and even publicly acts as a lawyer, so that this behaviour of his was the more remarkable and ridiculous: meanwhile Paulus was a good deal disconcerted by his friend's absurdity. You see how necessary it is for those who are anxious to recite their works in public to take care that the audience as well as the author are perfectly sane Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* TACITUS.

Your request that I would send you an account of my uncle's death, in order to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity, deserves my acknowledgments; for, if this accident shall be celebrated by your pen, the glory of it, I am well assured, will be rendered for ever illustrious. And notwithstanding he perished by a misfortune, which, as it involved at the same time a most beautiful country in ruins, and destroyed so many populous cities, seems to promise him an everlasting remembrance; notwithstanding he has himself composed many and lasting works; yet I am persuaded, the mentioning of him in your immortal writings, will greatly contribute to render his name immortal. Happy I esteem those to be to whom by provision of the gods has been granted the ability either to do such actions as are worthy of being related or to relate

* Nevertheless, Javolenus Priscus was one of the most eminent lawyers of his time, and is frequently quoted in the Digesta of Justinian.

them in a manner worthy of being read; but peculiarly happy are they who are blessed with both these uncommon talents: in the number of which my uncle, as his own writings and your history will evidently prove, may justly be ranked. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, that I execute your commands; and should indeed have claimed the task if you had not enjoined it. He was at that time with the fleet under his command at Misenum.* On the 24th of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared of a very unusual size and shape. He had just taken a turn in the sun,† and, after bathing himself in cold water, and making a light luncheon, gone back to his books: he immediately arose and went out upon a rising ground from whence he might get a better sight of this very uncommon appearance. A cloud, from which mountain was uncertain, at this distance (but it was found afterwards to come from Mount Vesuvius),‡ was ascending, the appearance of which

* In the Bay of Naples.

† The Romans used to lie or walk naked in the sun, after anointing their bodies with oil, which was esteeemed as greatly contributing to health, and therefore daily practised by them. This custom, however, of anointing themselves, is inveighed against by the satirists as in the number of their luxurious indulgences: but since we find the elder Pliny here, and the amiable Spurinna in a former letter, practising this method, we cannot suppose the thing itself was esteemed unmanly, but only when it was attended with some particular circumstances of an over-refined delicacy. *M.*

‡ About six miles distant from Naples.—This dreadful eruption happened A.D. 79, in the first year of the emperor Titus. Martial has a pretty epigram upon this subject, in which he gives us a view of Vesuvius, as it appeared before this terrible conflagration broke out:

'*Hic est pampineis viridis modo Vesuvius umbris,*
Presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus.
Haec juga, quàm Nisae colles, plus Bacchus amavit;
Hoc nuper Satyri monte dedêre choros.
Haec Veneris sedes, Lacedaemone gratior illi;
Hic locus Herculeo nomine clarus erat:
Cuncta jacent flammis, et tristi mersa favilla;
Nec vellent superi hoc licuisse sibi.'

Lib. iv. ep. xliv.

TRANSLATION.

'*Here* verdant vines o'erspread Vesuvio's sides;
The gen'rous grape *here* pour'd her purple tides.

I cannot give you a more exact description of than by likening it to that of a pine tree, for it shot up to a great height in the form of a very tall trunk, which spread itself out at the top into a sort of branches; occasioned, I imagine, either by a sudden gust of air that impelled it, the force of which decreased as it advanced upwards, or the cloud itself being pressed back again by its own weight, expanded in the manner I have mentioned; it appeared sometimes bright and sometimes dark and spotted, according as it was either more or less impregnated with earth and cinders. This phenomenon seemed to a man of such learning and research as my uncle extraordinary and worth further looking into. He ordered a light vessel to be got ready, and gave me leave, if I liked, to accompany him. I said I had rather go on with my work; and it so happened he had himself given me something to write out. As he was coming out of the house,* he received a note from Rectina, the wife of Bassus, who was in the utmost alarm at the imminent danger which threatened her; for her villa lying at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, there was no way of escape but by sea; she earnestly entreated him therefore to come to her assistance. He accordingly changed his first intention, and what he had begun from a philosophical, he now carries out in a noble and generous spirit. He ordered the galleys to put to sea, and went himself on board with an intention of assisting not

> *This* Bacchus lov'd beyond his native scene;
> *Here* dancing satyrs joy'd to trip the green.
> Far more than Sparta *this* in Venus' grace;
> And great Alcides once renown'd the place:
> Now flaming embers spread dire waste around,
> And gods regret that gods can thus confound.'

It seems probable that this was the first eruption of Mount Vesuvius, at least of any consequence; as it is certain we have no particular accounts of any preceding one. Dio, indeed, and other ancient authors speak of it as burning before; but still they describe it as covered with trees and vines, so that the eruptions must have been inconsiderable. *M.*

* The manuscript and printed copies vary extremely from each other as to the reading of this passage. The conjecture of Gesner seems the most satisfactory, as it comes nearest the most approved manuscripts, and best falls in with the context; it is, therefore adopted in the translation. *M.*

only Rectina, but the several other towns which lay thickly strewn along that beautiful coast. Hastening then to the place from whence others fled with the utmost terror, he steered his course direct to the point of danger, and with so much calmness and presence of mind as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the motion and all the phenomena of that dreadful scene. He was now so close to the mountain that the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the nearer he approached, fell into the ships, together with pumice-stones, and black pieces of burning rock: they were in danger too not only of being a-ground by the sudden retreat of the sea, but also from the vast fragments which rolled down from the mountain, and obstructed all the shore. Here he stopped to consider whether he should turn back again; to which the pilot advising him, 'Fortune,' said he, 'favours the brave; steer to where Pomponianus is.' Pomponianus was then at Stabiae*, separated by a bay, which the sea, after several insensible windings, forms with the shore. He had already sent his baggage on board; for though he was not at that time in actual danger, yet being within sight of it, and indeed extremely near, if it should in the least increase, he was determined to put to sea as soon as the wind, which was blowing dead in-shore, should go down. It was favourable, however, for carrying my uncle to Pomponianus, whom he found in the greatest consternation: he embraced him tenderly, encouraging and urging him to keep up his spirits, and, the more effectually to soothe his fears by seeming unconcerned himself, ordered a bath to be got ready, and then, after having bathed, sat down to supper with great cheerfulness, or at least (what is just as heroic) with every appearance of it. Meanwhile broad flames shone out in several places from Mount Vesuvius, which the darkness of the night contributed to render still brighter and clearer. But my uncle, in order to soothe the apprehensions of his friend, assured him it was only the burning of the villages, which the country people had abandoned to the flames: after this he retired to rest, and it is most certain he was so little disquieted as to fall into a sound sleep: for his breathing,

* Now called Castelamare, in the Bay of Naples. *M.*

which, on account of his corpulence, was rather heavy and sonorous, was heard by the attendants outside. The court which led to his apartment being now almost filled with stones and ashes, if he had continued there any time longer, it would have been impossible for him to have made his way out. So he was awoke and got up, and went to Pomponianus and the rest of his company, who were feeling too anxious to think of going to bed. They consulted together whether it would be most prudent to trust to the houses, which now rocked from side to side with frequent and violent concussions as though shaken from their very foundations; or fly to the open fields, where the calcined stones and cinders, though light indeed, yet fell in large showers, and threatened destruction. In this choice of dangers they resolved for the fields: a resolution which, while the rest of the company were hurried into by their fears, my uncle embraced upon cool and deliberate consideration. They went out then, having pillows tied upon their heads with napkins; and this was their whole defence against the storm of stones that fell round them. It was now day everywhere else, but *there* a deeper darkness prevailed than in the thickest night; which however was in some degree alleviated by torches and other lights of various kinds. They thought proper to go farther down upon the shore to see if they might safely put out to sea, but found the waves still running extremely high, and boisterous. There my uncle, laying himself down upon a sail-cloth, which was spread for him, called twice for some cold water, which he drank, when immediately the flames, preceded by a strong whiff of sulphur, dispersed the rest of the party, and obliged him to rise. He raised himself up with the assistance of two of his servants, and instantly fell down dead; suffocated, as I conjecture, by some gross and noxious vapour, having always had a weak throat, which was often inflamed. As soon as it was light again, which was not till the third day after this melancholy accident, his body was found entire, and without any marks of violence upon it, in the dress in which he fell, and looking more like a man asleep than dead. During all this time my mother and I, who

were at Misenum*—but this has no connection with your history, and you did not desire any particulars besides those of my uncle's death; so I will end here, only adding that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself or received immediately after the accident happened, and before there was time to vary the truth. You will pick out of this narrative whatever is most important: for a letter is one thing, a history another; it is one thing writing to friend, another thing writing to the public. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* Restitutus.

I cannot forbear pouring out my disgust to you in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person, against a certain kind of behaviour which gave me some offence at the rehearsal of a friend of mine lately. The company was entertained with a recital of a very finished piece: but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of great genius in their own, and a few of their friends', estimation, who sate like so many mutes, without so much as moving a lip or a hand, or once rising from their seats, even to change their position. But to what purpose, in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or indeed (to give it its truer appellation) of this apathetic arrogance, this perversity or madness rather, to expend a whole day merely in committing a piece of rudeness, and leaving *him* an enemy whom you visited as a *friend?* Supposing you *are* more eloquent than he? so much the more reason then you have for not being envious, for envy implies inferiority. But whatever a man's talent may be, whether greater or equal, or less than his friend's, still it is his interest to give him the approbation he deserves: whether greater or equal; because the higher his glory rises whom you equal or excel, the more considerable yours must necessarily be: if less; because if one of more exalted abilities does not meet with applause, neither possibly can you. For my own part, I

* See this account continued, letter xx. of this book. *M.*

am wont to respect and honour all who make any progress in the art of oratory; for Eloquence is a high and haughty dame, who scorns to take up her abode with those that despise her. But perhaps you are not of this opinion: yet who has a greater regard for this glorious science, or is a kindlier judge of it than yourself? In confidence of which I chose to vent my indignation particularly to you, as not doubting you would be the first to share with me in the same feelings. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* SABINUS.

I will endeavour, as you desire, to undertake the cause of the Firmiani,* though I have a good deal of business upon my hands just now: for I should be extremely glad to oblige so illustrious a colony by my good offices, as well as to render you an acceptable service. How indeed can I refuse anything to you, who profess to have sought my friendship as your support and ornament; especially when your request is on behalf of your country? For what can be more honourable than the entreaties of a patriot, or more efficacious than those of a friend? You may engage for me therefore to your or rather, as I should now call them, *our* friends the Firmiani. And even though their own illustrious character did not persuade me that they deserve my care and patronage, yet I could not but entertain a very high opinion of their worth, from seeing a man of your distinguished virtues choose to reside amongst them.

LETTER XIX. *To* NEPOS.

Are you aware that the price of lands is considerably risen; especially of those which lie about Rome? This sudden advance was occasioned by a practice which has been much complained of, and which drew from the senate, at the last assembly for the election of magistrates, a very honourable decree, whereby the candidates for any office are prohibited from giving the electors any treat, present,

* Inhabitants of a city in Italy, called Firmo, near Ancona. *M.*

or money whatsoever. The two former of these abuses were practised with as little reserve as discretion; the latter, though carried on with more secrecy, was however equally notorious. Our friend Homulus, taking advantage of this favourable disposition of the senate, instead of giving his opinion upon the point in debate, moved that the consuls might signify to the emperor * their unanimous desire, and petition him to interpose his vigilance and authority for the redress of this evil, as he had for that of every other. The emperor was accordingly pleased to comply, and by the law against bribery restrained those infamous and disgraceful largesses; directing that no person shall be admitted as a candidate who has not a third part of his estate in land; esteeming it highly indecent (as no doubt it is) that those who aspire to high places in the state should look upon Rome and Italy rather like travellers who are passing through it than as their proper country. Consequently there is a general struggle now among those who aim at any office, and they buy up eagerly everything which they hear is to be sold; by which means the value of lands is greatly increased. If therefore you are inclined to dispose of any part of your estate here, or to purchase one in the provinces, now is your time, whilst these candidates are obliged to sell their estates over there to enable them to buy here. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* Cornelius Tacitus.

The letter which, in compliance with your request, I wrote to you concerning the death of my uncle has raised, it seems, your curiosity to know what terrors and dangers attended me while I continued at Misenum; for there, I think, my account broke off:

'Though my shock'd soul recoils, my tongue shall tell.' †

My uncle having left us, I spent such time as was left on my studies (it was on their account indeed that I had

* Trajan. † Virg. Pitt's translation.

stopped behind), till it was time for my bath. After which I went to supper, and then fell into a short and uneasy sleep. There had been noticed for many days before a trembling of the earth, which did not alarm us much, as this is quite an ordinary occurrence in Campania; but it was so particularly violent that night that it not only shook but actually overturned, as it would seem, everything about us. My mother rushed into my chamber, where she found me rising, in order to awaken her. We sat down in the open court of the house, which occupied a small space between the buildings and the sea. As I was at that time but eighteen years of age, I know not whether I should call my behaviour, in this dangerous juncture, courage or folly; but I took up Livy, and amused myself with turning over that author, and even making extracts from him, as if I had been perfectly at my leisure. Just then, a friend of my uncle's, who had lately come to him from Spain, joined us, and observing me sitting by my mother with a book in my hand, reproved her for her calmness, and me at the same time for my careless security: nevertheless I went on with my author. Though it was now morning, the light was still exceedingly faint and doubtful; the buildings all around us tottered, and though we stood upon open ground, yet as the place was narrow and confined, there was no remaining without imminent danger: we therefore resolved to quit the town. A panic-stricken crowd followed us, and (as to a mind distracted with terror every suggestion seems more prudent than its own) pressed on us in dense array to drive us forward as we came out. Being at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most dangerous and dreadful scene. The chariots, which we had ordered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though upon the most level ground, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is certain at least the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea animals were left upon it. On the other side, a black and dreadful cloud, broken with rapid, zigzag flashes, revealed behind it variously shaped masses of flame: these last were

like sheet-lightning, but much larger. Upon this our Spanish friend, whom I mentioned above, addressing himself to my mother and me with great energy and urgency: 'If your brother,' he said, 'if your uncle be safe, he certainly wishes you may be so too; but if he perished, it was his desire, no doubt, that you might both survive him: why therefore do you delay your escape a moment?' We could never think of our own safety, we said, while we were uncertain of his. Upon this our friend left us, and withdrew from the danger with the utmost precipitation. Soon afterwards, the cloud began to descend, and cover the sea. It had already surrounded and concealed the island of Capreae* and the promontory of Misenum. My mother now besought, urged, even commanded me to make my escape at any rate, which, as I was young, I might easily do; as for herself, she said, her age and corpulency rendered all attempts of that sort impossible; however she would willingly meet death if she could have the satisfaction of seeing that she was not the occasion of mine. But I absolutely refused to leave her, and, taking her by the hand, compelled her to go with me. She complied with great reluctance, and not without many reproaches to herself for retarding my flight. The ashes now began to fall upon us, though in no great quantity. I looked back; a dense dark mist seemed to be following us, spreading itself over the country like a cloud. 'Let us turn out of the high-road,' I said, 'while we can still see, for fear that, should we fall in the road, we should be pressed to death in the dark, by the crowds that are following us.' We had scarcely sat down when night came upon us, not such as we have when the sky is cloudy, or when there is no moon, but that of a room when it is shut up, and all the lights put out. You might hear the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the shouts of men; some calling for their children, others for their parents, others for their husbands, and seeking to recognise each other by the voices that replied; one lamenting his own fate, another that of his family; some wishing to die, from the very fear of dying; some lifting their hands to the gods; but the greater part convinced that there were now no

* An island near Naples, now called Capri. *M.*

gods at all, and that the final endless night of which we have heard had come upon the world.* Among these there were some who augmented the real terrors by others imaginary or wilfully invented. I remember some who declared that one part of Misenum had fallen, that another was on fire; it was false, but they found people to believe them. It now grew rather lighter, which we imagined to be rather the forerunner of an approaching burst of flames (as in truth it was) than the return of day: however, the fire fell at a distance from us: then again we were immersed in thick darkness, and a heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which we were obliged every now and then to stand up to shake off, otherwise we should have been crushed and buried in the heap. I might boast that, during all this scene of horror, not a sigh, or expression of fear, escaped me, had not my support been grounded in that miserable, though mighty, consolation, that all mankind were involved in the same calamity, and that I was perishing with the world itself. At last this dreadful darkness was dissipated by degrees, like a cloud or smoke; the real day returned, and even the sun shone out, though with a lurid light, like when an eclipse is coming on. Every object that presented itself to our eyes (which were extremely weakened) seemed changed, being covered deep with ashes as if with snow. We returned to Misenum, where we refreshed ourselves as well as we could, and passed an anxious night between hope and fear; though, indeed, with a much larger share of the latter: for the earthquake still continued, while many frenzied persons ran up and down heightening their own and their friends' calamities by terrible predictions. However, my mother and I, notwithstanding the danger we had passed, and that which still threatened us, had no thoughts of leaving the place, till we could receive some news of my uncle.

And now, you will read this narrative without any view of inserting it in your history, of which it is not in the least worthy; and indeed you must put it down to your

* The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers held that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and all things fall again into original chaos; not excepting even the national gods themselves from the destruction of this general conflagration. *M.*

own request if it should appear not worth even the trouble of a letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* Caninius.

Though I acknowledge myself an admirer of the ancients, yet I am very far from despising, as some affect, the genius of the moderns: nor can I suppose that nature in these latter ages is so worn out and feeble as to be incapable of producing anything worth praising. On the contrary, I have lately had the pleasure of hearing Verginius Romanus read to a few select friends a comedy, composed in the manner of the ancient comic drama, and so happily that it may one day serve itself for a model. I do not know whether he is in the number of your acquaintance; I am sure, at least, he ought to be, as he is notable for his moral integrity, mental refinement, and the variety of his productions. He has written some very agreeable pieces of the burlesque kind in iambics, with much delicacy, wit, humour, and, I will add too, even eloquence for this class of composition; for there is no species of it which, when perfect of its kind, may not with propriety be termed eloquent. He has also composed some comedies after the manner of Menander * and other approved authors of that age, which deserve to be ranked with those of Plautus and Terence. He has now, for the first time, attempted the ancient comedy,† but in such a manner as to show he is a perfect master in this way. Strength, majesty, and

* An Athenian poet, born B.C. 342. He stood at the head of the new comedy school, though his merits were but scantily acknowledged by the public. He has had many imitators among Roman dramatists; the plays of Terence, indeed, are little more than Menander slightly altered.

† With regard to the various changes and revolutions comedy has undergone, it is distinguished into three kinds, viz. the *ancient*, which was founded upon real facts, and persons pointed out by their proper names; the *middle*, where the subject was real, but the names fictitious; the *new*, wherein both the names and the action are imaginary. Of the *first* model was Aristophanes; upon whose general manner, it is probable, Romanus formed his comedy here mentioned; but as he appears to have made use both of true and invented names in his characters, it seems to have been of the *mixed* kind. *M.*

delicacy, softness, poignancy, and wit, are all present here. He honours virtue and chastises vice: whenever he makes use of feigned names, he does so in a becoming way, just as he employs real ones appropriately. With respect only to myself, I should say he has erred through an excess of kind feeling, if I did not know that fiction is the privilege of poets. In a word, I will insist upon his letting me have the copy, that I may send it you to read, or rather get up by heart; for I am well persuaded when you have once taken it up, you will not easily lay it down again. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* TIRO.

An affair has lately been transacted here which nearly concerns those who shall hereafter be appointed governors of provinces, as well as every man who too incautiously trusts his friends. Lustricius Bruttianus, having detected his lieutenant Montanus Atticinus in several flagrant delinquencies, informed the emperor of them. Atticinus, on the other hand, added to his guilt by commencing a groundless prosecution against the friend whose confidence he had abused. His information was received, and I was one of the assessors at this trial. Both parties pleaded their own cause, but in a summary, *résumé*, sort of way: by which method the truth is soon got at. Bruttianus, as a proof of the unreserved confidence between them, and that nothing but absolute necessity could have extorted from him this complaint against one whom he had once loved so, produced his will, all in the handwriting of Atticinus. He then proceeded to open the charge, and clearly proved him guilty of the most infamous conduct. Atticinus, while quite unable to justify his conduct, caused the charges to recoil back upon himself in such a way as to make his defence appear as weak as his accusation was wicked. It was proved that he had bribed a slave belonging to the secretary of Bruttianus, and by that means got into his possession his register-book, which he erased, and then made this consummate piece of villany the handle of a charge against his friend. Caesar * acted most

* Trajan.

nobly: without collecting the voices with respect to Bruttianus, he proceeded immediately to take them only in relation to Atticinus, who was accordingly condemned and banished to an island. Bruttianus was acquitted not only with a very full and honourable testimony of his integrity, but with the credit of having behaved in this affair with great firmness. And, indeed, after having vindicated his own character in few words, he supported his charge against Atticinus with great spirit, and approved himself no less a man of just severity than of worth and honesty. I send you this account not only as a caution for your behaviour in the government you have obtained, and as a hint to depend upon yourself as much as possible, without relying too far upon your friends; but that you may be well assured, if you should happen to be imposed upon in the execution of your office (as far be it that you ever should), you will readily meet with satisfaction here. However, that you may stand in no need of it, keep yourself constantly on the alert; for the pleasure of being redressed most certainly cannot compensate the uneasiness of being deceived. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII. *To* Triarius.

I consent to undertake the cause which you so earnestly recommend to me; but glorious and honourable as it may be, I will not be your counsel without a fee. 'How is it possible,' you will say, 'that my friend Pliny can be so mercenary?' Well, it is possible; and I insist upon a reward which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage. I beg of you then, and indeed I make it a previous condition, that Cremutius Ruso may be joint counsel with me in this cause. This is a practice which I have frequently observed with respect to several distinguished youths; as I take infinite pleasure in introducing young men of merit to the bar, and handing them over to fame. But if ever I owed this good office to any man, it is certainly to Ruso, not only upon account of his family, but his excessive affection for me; and it would afford me a very singular satisfaction to have an oppor

tunity of seeing him draw the attention of the audience in the same court and the same cause with myself. Oblige me in this instance, *do*, before he pleads; for when he has pleaded in your cause, you will thank me: I will undertake for him that he shall satisfy your expectations, as well as my hopes and the importance of the cause. He is of the best disposition imaginable, and when once I have brought him into notice, we shall soon see him exert the same generous office towards others; as indeed no man without the support and encouragement of friends, and having proper opportunities thrown in his way, is able to rise at once from obscurity, by the brightness of his own unaided genius.

LETTER XXIV. *To* MACER.

How much does the fame of human actions depend upon the station of those who perform them! The very same conduct shall be either applauded to the skies or entirely overlooked, just as it may happen to proceed from a person of conspicuous or obscure rank. I was sailing lately upon our lake,* with an old man of my acquaintance, who desired me to observe a villa situated upon its banks, which had a chamber overhanging the water. 'From that room,' said he, 'a woman of our city threw herself and her husband.' Upon enquiring into the cause, he informed me, 'That her husband having been long afflicted with an ulcer in those parts which modesty conceals, she prevailed with him at last to let her inspect the sore, assuring him at the same time that she would most sincerely give her opinion whether there was a possibility of its being cured. Accordingly, upon viewing the ulcer, she found the case hopeless, and therefore advised him to put an end to his life: she herself accompanying him, even leading the way by her example, and being actually the means of his death; for tying herself to her husband, she plunged with him into the lake.' Though this happened in the very city where I was born, I never heard it mentioned before; and yet that this action is taken less notice

* The lake Larius.

of than that famous one of Arria's,* is not because it was less remarkable, but because the person who performed it was more obscure. Farewell.

LETTER XXV. *To* Hispanus.

You inform me that Robustus, a Roman knight of distinction, accompanied my friend Attilius Scaurus as far as Ocriculum,† but has never been heard of since. In compliance, therefore, with your desire, I shall send for Scaurus, in order to see if he can give us any light in tracing him; though, I am afraid, it will be to no purpose. I suspect an accident of the same unaccountable kind has attended Robustus as formerly happened to my townsman Metilius Crispus. I procured a company for him in the army, and gave him, when he set out, forty thousand sesterces ‡ for his equipage: but I never received a letter from him, or could learn any tidings of him afterwards. Whether he was murdered by his servants, or together with them, is uncertain; however, neither he nor they appeared again. I only trust we may not find it thus with respect to Robustus; nevertheless I shall send for Scaurus. I cannot refuse this either to your generous request, or the very laudable entreaties of that most excellent youth his son, who shows as much good sense in the method as he does filial affection in the zeal of his enquiry: the gods grant him the same success in finding his father as he has had in discovering the person that accompanied him! Farewell.

LETTER XXVI. *To* Servianus.

I am extremely glad to hear that you intend your daughter for Fuscus Salinator, and congratulate you upon it. His family is patrician,§ and both his father and

* See an account of her, book iii. letter xvi.

† Now Otricoli.

‡ About £312. Some editions read it 400,000 sesterces, which is about £3100. *M.*

§ Those families were styled patrician whose ancestors had been

mother are persons of the most distinguished merit. As for himself, he is studious, learned, and eloquent, and, with all the innocence of a child, unites the sprightliness of youth and the wisdom of age. I am not, believe me, deceived by my affection, when I give him this character; for though I love him, I confess, beyond measure (as his friendship and esteem for me well deserve), yet partiality has no share in my judgment: on the contrary, the stronger my affection for him, the more exactingly I weigh his merit. I will venture, then, to assure you (and I speak it upon my own experience) you could not have, formed to your wishes, a more accomplished son-in law. May he soon present you with a grandson, who shall be the exact copy of his father! and with what pleasure shall I receive from the arms of two such friends their children or grandchildren, whom I shall claim a sort of right to embrace as my own! Farewell.

LETTER XXVII. *To* SEVERUS.

You desire me to consider what turn you should give to your speech in honour of the emperor,* upon your being appointed consul elect.† It is easy to find copies, not so easy to choose out of them; for his virtues afford such abundant material. However, I will write and give you my opinion, or (what I should prefer) I will let you have it in person, after having laid before you the difficulties which occur to me. I am doubtful, then, whether I should advise you to pursue the method which I observed myself on the same occasion. When I was consul elect, I avoided running into the usual strain of compliment, which, however far from adulation, might yet look like it. Not that I affected firmness and independence; but, as well knowing

members of the senate in the earliest times of the regal or consular government. *M.*

* Trajan.

† The consuls, though they were chosen in August, did not enter upon their office till the first of January, during which interval they were styled *consules designati*, consuls elect. It was usual for them upon that occasion to compliment the emperor, by whose appointment, after the dissolution of the republican government, they were chosen. *M.*

the sentiments of our amiable prince, and being thoroughly persuaded that the highest praise I could offer to him would be to show the world I was under no necessity of paying him any. When I reflected what profusion of honours had been heaped upon the very worst of his predecessors, nothing, I imagined, could more distinguish a prince of his real virtues from those infamous emperors than to address him in a different manner. And this I thought proper to observe in my speech, lest it might be suspected I passed over his glorious acts, not out of judgment, but inattention. Such was the method I then observed; but I am sensible the same measures are neither agreeable nor indeed suitable to all alike. Besides the propriety of doing or omitting a thing depends not only upon persons, but time and circumstances; and as the late actions of our illustrious prince afford materials for panegyric, no less just than recent and glorious, I doubt (as I said before) whether I should persuade you in the present instance to adopt the same plan as I did myself. In this, however, I am clear, that it was proper to offer you by way of advice the method I pursued. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII. *To* Quadratus.

I was not ignorant of the reason which prevented your coming into Campania to receive me. But absent, as you were, might I have judged by the vast quantity of provisions of all sorts, with which I was supplied by your orders, I should have imagined you had conveyed yourself hither with your whole possessions: I must own though, I shamelessly accepted it all; for your people pressed me, and I was afraid of our both incurring your displeasure if I refused. But for the future, if *you* will not observe some limits, *I* must. And accordingly I assured your servants, if ever they offered me so many things again, I would absolutely return the whole. You will tell me, I know, that I ought to consider everything belonging to you as entirely mine. Exactly; and therefore I would use them with the same moderation as my own. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX. *To* QUADRATUS.

Avidius Quietus, whose singular affection and (what I equally value) whose esteem I had the happiness to enjoy, used frequently to repeat this maxim, among others, of his friend Thrasea's: that 'the causes which we ought to undertake are those of our friends, those of persons who are destitute of any other advocate to plead their claim, and those which relate to public example.' Why we should engage in the cause of our friends requires no explanation; but the deserted have a claim to our assistance, because it shows a resolute and humane disposition; whilst we ought to engage in such a cause as would establish a precedent, since it is of the utmost consequence to society whether a good or an evil one prevails. To which I will add (perhaps in the spirit of ambition, however I will venture to add) those also of a public and conspicuous nature. For it is reasonable, no doubt, sometimes to plead the cause of glory and fame, or, in other words, *one's own*. These are the limits (since you ask my opinion) I would prescribe to a person of your dignity and moderation. Practice, I know, is generally considered, and in fact is, the best master in the art of pleading; and I have seen many who with moderate abilities and no learning have, merely by that alone, arrived at a respectable proficiency. Nevertheless, the observation of Pollio, or, at least, what usually passes for his, I have found by experience to be most true. 'By good pleading,' said he, 'I obtained plenty of practice; and, on the other hand, so much practice spoiled my pleading.' The reason is, by too frequent a repetition it becomes a mechanical facility rather than a talent, and degenerates into a rash assurance, instead of settling into a just confidence in one's powers. Accordingly we see that the excessive modesty of Isocrates,* which, together

* One of the ten Attic orators. Born B.C. 436. Owing to his natural diffidence and the delicacy of his health, he never actually spoke in public, but confined himself to taking pupils in oratory, and writing speeches for others. His style of composition is elegant, but too studied and artificial; he is said to have taken fifteen years over the most famous of his speeches, his Panegyric. An ardent patriot, he put an end to himself in his 98th year, on the news of the defeat of his countrymen by Philip, at Chaeronea, B.C. 338.

with the weakness of his voice, prevented his appearing in public, did not at all prevent his attaining the character of a consummate orator. Read then and write a good deal, and think over your subject well, that you may be able to speak whenever you choose; and you will never choose to do so, I am sure, but when you ought. *That* at least is the principle I laid down for myself. I have sometimes, indeed, pleaded, not so much from choice as necessity; but to comply with necessity is, in some degree, to comply with reason, having on some occasions been appointed counsel by order of the senate; but it was in cases which fell within Thrasea's third rule, that is, of the exemplary kind. I was advocate for the province of Baetica, against Baebius Massa; where the question being, whether the impeachment should be received? it passed in the affirmative. I appeared for them a second time against Caecilius Classicus,* and the point in debate was, whether the provincial officers who acted under him should be punished as confederates and accomplices with the proconsul in his crimes? It was determined they should; and they were punished accordingly. I was counsel against Marius Priscus,† who, having been convicted of bribery, endeavoured to take advantage of the lenity of the law in that case, the penalty of which was by no means adequate to his enormous guilt: but he was sentenced to banishment. I defended Julius Bassus‡ in an affair in which he had acted imprudently, it is true, but not in the least with any ill intention: the matter was referred to the ordinary judges, and he was permitted in the meanwhile to retain his seat in the senate. I pleaded likewise not long since, on behalf of Varenus, who petitioned for leave to produce witnesses also on his part; which was granted him. And now I will only wish, that I may, for the future, be enjoined to plead such causes by authority, in which it would become me to appear by choice. Farewell.

* See book iii. letter ix. † See book ii. letter xi.
‡ See book iv. letter iv.

LETTER XXX. *To* FABATUS.

I have the best reason, certainly, for celebrating your birthday as my own, since all the happiness of mine arises from yours, to whose care and diligence it is owing that I am gay here and at my ease in town.—Your Camillian villa * in Campania has suffered by the injuries of time, and is falling into decay; however, the most valuable parts of the building either remain entire or are but slightly damaged, and it shall be my care to see it put into thorough repair.—Though I flatter myself I have many friends, yet I have scarcely any of the sort you enquire after, and which the affair you mention demands. All mine lie among those whose employments engage them in town; whereas the conduct of country business requires a person of a robust constitution, and bred up to the country, to whom the work may not seem hard, nor the office beneath him, and who does not feel a solitary life depressing. You think most highly of Rufus, for he was a great friend of your son's; but of what use he can be to us upon this occasion, I cannot conceive; though I am sure he will be glad to do all he can for us. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI. *To* CORNELIANUS.

I received lately the most exquisite satisfaction at Centumcellae† (at it is now called), being summoned thither by Caesar‡ to attend a council. Could anything indeed afford a higher pleasure than to see the emperor exercising his justice, his wisdom, and his affability, even in retirement, where those virtues are most observable? Various were the points brought in judgment before him, and which proved, in so many different instances, the excellence of the judge. The cause of Claudius Ariston came on first. He is an Ephesian nobleman, of great munificence and unambitious popularity, whose virtues have rendered him

* So called, because it formerly belonged to Camillus. *M.*
† Civita Vecchia. ‡ Trajan.

obnoxious to a set of people of far different characters; they had instigated an informer against him, of the same infamous stamp with themselves; but he was honourably acquitted. The next day, the case of Galitta, accused of adultery, was heard. Her husband, who is a military tribune, was upon the point of offering himself as a candidate for certain honours at Rome, but she had stained her own good name and his by an intrigue with a centurion.* The husband informed the consul's lieutenant, who wrote to the emperor about it. Caesar, having thoroughly sifted the evidence, cashiered the centurion, and sentenced him to banishment. It remained that some penalty should be inflicted likewise upon the other party, as it is a crime of which both must necessarily be equally guilty. But the husband's affection for his wife inclined him to drop that part of the prosecution, not without some reflections on his forbearance; for he continued to live with her even after he had commenced this prosecution, content, it would seem, with having removed his rival. But he was ordered to proceed in the suit; and, though he complied with great reluctance, it was necessary, nevertheless, that she should be condemned. Accordingly, she was sentenced to the punishment directed by the Julian law.† The emperor thought proper to specify, in his decree, the name and office of the centurion, that it might appear he passed it in virtue of military discipline; lest it should be imagined he claimed a particular cognizance in every cause of the same nature. The third day was employed in examining into an affair which had occasioned a good deal of talk and various reports; it was concerning the codicils of Julius Tiro, part of which was plainly genuine, while the other part, it was alleged, was forged. The persons accused of this fraud were Sempronius Senecio, a Roman knight, and Eurythmus, Caesar's freedman and procurator.‡ The heirs jointly petitioned the emperor, when he was in

* An officer in the Roman legions, answering in some sort to a captain in our companies. *M.*

† This law was made by Augustus Caesar; but it nowhere clearly appears what was the peculiar punishment it inflicted. *M.*

‡ An officer employed by the emperor to receive and regulate the public revenue in the provinces. *M.*

Dacia,* that he would reserve to himself the trial of this cause; to which he consented. On his return from that expedition, he appointed a day for the hearing; and when some of the heirs, as though out of respect to Eurythmus, offered to withdraw the suit, the emperor nobly replied, 'He is not Polycletus,† nor am I Nero.' However, he indulged the petitioners with an adjournment, and the time being expired, he now sat to hear the cause. Two of the heirs appeared, and desired that either their whole number might be compelled to plead, as they had all joined in the information, or that they also might have leave to withdraw. Caesar delivered his opinion with great dignity and moderation; and when the counsel on the part of Senecio and Eurythmus had represented that unless their clients were heard, they would remain under the suspicion of guilt,—'I am not concerned,' said the emperor, 'what supicions they may lie under, it is I that am suspected;' and then turning to us, 'Advise me,' said he, 'how to act in this affair, for you see they complain when allowed to withdraw their suit.' At length, by the advice of the counsel, he ordered notice to be given to the heirs that they should either proceed with the case or each of them justify their reasons for not doing so; otherwise that he would pass sentence upon them as calumniators.‡ Thus you see how usefully and seriously we spent our time, which however was diversified with amusements of the most agreeable kind. We were every day invited to Caesar's table, which, for so great a prince, was spread with much plainness and simplicity. There we were either entertained with interludes or passed the night in the most pleasing conversation. When we took our leave of him the last day, he made each of us presents; so studiously polite is Caesar! As for myself, I was not only charmed with the dignity and

* Comprehending Transylvania, Moldavia, and Walachia. *M.*

† Polycletus was a freedman, and great favourite of Nero. *M.*

‡ Memmius, or Rhemmius (the critics are not agreed which), was author of a law by which it was enacted that whosoever was convicted of calumny and false accusation should be stigmatised with a mark in his forehead; and by the law of the twelve tables, false accusers were to suffer the same punishment as would have been inflicted upon the person unjustly accused if the crime had been proved. *M.*

wisdom of the judge, the honour done to the assessors, the ease and unreserved freedom of our social intercourse, but with the exquisite situation of the place itself. This delightful villa is surrounded by the greenest meadows, and overlooks the shore, which bends inwards, forming a complete harbour. The left arm of this port is defended by exceedingly strong works, while the right is in process of completion. An artificial island, which rises at the mouth of the harbour, breaks the force of the waves, and affords a safe passage to ships on either side. This island is formed by a process worth seeing: stones of a most enormous size are transported hither in a large sort of pontoons, and being piled one upon the other, are fixed by their own weight, gradually accumulating in the manner, as it were, of a natural mound. It already lifts its rocky back above the ocean, while the waves which beat upon it, being broken and tossed to an immense height, foam with a prodigious noise, and whiten all the surrounding sea. To these stones are added wooden piers, which in process of time will give it the appearance of a natural island. This haven is to be called by the name of its great author,* and will prove of infinite benefit, by affording a secure retreat to ships on that extensive and dangerous coast. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII. *To* Quintilian.

Though your desires, I know, are extremely moderate, and though you have brought up your daughter† as became a

* Trajan.

† This letter has been generally supposed to be addressed to the famous Quintilian, author of that excellent treatise upon oratory, which is still extant. But there are very strong reasons to believe that either there is some error in the title or that it is addressed to another person of the same name. Quintilian, in the opening of his sixth book, De Inst. Orat., takes occasion to mention his family, where he is lamenting to his friend Victorius the loss of his eldest son, which had just then happened. He takes notice at the same time of the deaths of his wife and younger son, and, after some very pathetic reflections, closes the whole with this observation: '*Nos miseri, sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus* aliis *paramus*, aliis *relinquemus.*' This preface may be considered, then, as his domestic history. But he does not give the least hint of a daughter: which seems difficult to be

daughter of yours and the grand-daughter of Tutilius, yet as she is going to be married to a person of such distinction as Nonius Celer, whose civil employment necessarily imposes upon him a certain style of living, her wardrobe and establishment should be enlarged according to the rank of her husband: circumstances which though they do not augment our real dignity, yet certainly adorn and grace it. But as I am sensible the wealth of your revenue is not equal to the wealth of your mind, I claim to myself a part of your expense, and, like another father, present our young lady with fifty thousand sesterces.* The sum should be larger, but that I am well persuaded the smallness of the present is the only consideration that can prevail with your modesty not to refuse it. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII. *To* ROMANUS.

'Do all away,' he said, 'lay by the labour so far done.' †

Thus, whether you are engaged in reading or writing, away with your books and papers, and take up my divine oration, as those Cyclopes did the arms of Aeneas. Now could I introduce my speech to you with an air of more importance? But, in sober earnest, I put it into your hands as the best of my performances;‡ for it is myself only that I pretend to emulate. It was spoken in defence of Attia Variola; and the dignity of the party interested, the singularity of the occasion, together with the majesty of the tribunal, conspire to render it extremely remarkable. Picture to yourself a lady ennobled not only by her

accounted for upon any other reason than that he never had one. For if she was dead, it is highly natural to imagine he would have deplored the loss of her among that of the rest of his children. If she was living, how could he lament the necessity of leaving his patrimony to *strangers*? or if she was unworthy of his tenderness, why does he not complain of that unhappiness among his other misfortunes? Vid. Traduct. de Quint. par l'Abbé Gedoyn, in the preface. *M.*

* About £400.

† Aen. viii. 439 (Morris's translation); the speech of Vulcan to his Cyclopes, when he directs them to prepare arms for Aeneas. *M.*

‡ Sidonius Apollinaris says that Pliny acquired more honour by this speech even than by his incomparable panegyric upon Trajan *M*

birth, but her marriage to a person of praetorian rank, disinherited by her father, and suing for her patrimony in the four courts, within eleven days after this old man, seized with a love-fit at fourscore years of age, had brought home a step-mother to his daughter. One hundred and eighty judges sat on the trial (for that is the number appointed for these four courts); friends innumerable attended on both parties; the benches were thronged, and a dense crowd encircled the whole court in a promiscuous ring, at the same time that numbers pressed round the tribunal; while even the very galleries were lined with men and women, straining over (who, though they might see tolerably well, could barely be able to hear a word); in short, fathers, daughters, and step-mothers, were all warmly interesting themselves in the issue of this important trial. The opinions of the judges were divided, two of the courts being for us, and two against us. It is somewhat remarkable that the same question debated before the same judges, and pleaded by the same advocates, and at the same time, should happen to receive so different a decision, that one would almost imagine it was more than accident. However, in the final event, the mother-in-law, who claimed under the will a sixth part of the inheritance, lost her cause. Suberinus* was also excluded his pretensions; who though he had been disinherited by his father, without daring to vindicate his own patrimony, yet had the singular assurance to demand that of another. I have been thus particular in giving you a detail of the circumstances which attended this case, not only that my letter might inform you of what you could not learn by my speech, but also (for I will honestly confess the artifice) that you might read it with more pleasure, by being thus introduced, as it were, into the audience. And extensive as this pleading is, I do not despair of its recommending itself to you, as much as if it had the grace of brevity. The abundance of matter, the just order in which it is arranged, the little narratives interspersed throughout, together with the variety of style,

* This Suberinus (the commentators suppose) was son to the woman whom Attia's father had married in his old age. *M.*

will always give it an air of novelty. I will even venture to say to you (what I dare not to any one else) that a spirit of great fire and sublimity breaks out in many parts of it, at the same time that in others it is wrought up with much delicacy and closeness of reasoning. I was frequently obliged to intermix dry computations with the elevated and pathetic, and to descend from the orator almost to the accountant; so that you will sometimes imagine the scene was changed from the solemnity of the Hundred tribunal to the familiarity of a private consultation. I gave the head to my indignation, my resentment, and my compassion, and in steering through this illustrious cause, as in a vast sea, I was borne along before every varying gust. In a word, my particular friends are wont to consider this speech, I will venture to repeat, as my best performance, esteeming it the Ctesiphon* of my orations: whether with reason or not, you will easily judge, who have them all so perfectly in your memory as to be able, while you are reading this, to compare it with my former, without the trouble of turning to them. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV. *To* MAXIMUS.

You did perfectly right in promising a gladiatorial combat to our good friends the citizens of Verona,† who have long loved, looked up to, and honoured, you; while it was from that city too you received that amiable object of your most tender affection, your late excellent wife. And since you owed some monument or public representation to her memory, what other spectacle could you have exhibited more appropriate to the occasion?‡ Besides,

* An oration of Demosthenes in defence of Ctesiphon, esteemed the best of that noble orator's speeches. *M.*

† In the territories of Venice. *M.*

‡ It was an opinion, which unhappily prevailed in the ancient pagan world, that the ghosts of the deceased were rendered propitious by human blood. This absurd notion gave rise to those barbarous gladiatorial combats which at first were only exhibited at funeral obsequies, and none but criminals were appointed to those mortal encounters. But in process of time they became part of the public entertainments, and persons were trained up for the sole purpose of these inhuman shows. *M.*

you were so unanimously pressed to do so that to have refused would have looked more like hardness than resolution. The readiness too with which you granted their petition, and the magnificent* manner in which you performed it, is very much to your honour; for a greatness of soul is seen in these smaller instances, as well as in matters of higher moment. I wish the African panthers, which you had largely provided for this purpose, had arrived on the day appointed, but though they were delayed by the stormy weather, the obligation to you is equally the same, since it was not your fault that they were not exhibited. Farewell.

* The amphitheatre in which these shows were exhibited is still to be seen in Verona, whose inside is the most entire of any now remaining. It is computed to have room to contain upwards of three-and-twenty thousand spectators conveniently. Vid. Wright's Travels. *M.*

BOOK VII.

LETTER I. *To* Restitutus.

This obstinate illness of yours alarms me; and though I know how extremely temperate you are, yet I fear lest your disease should get the better of your moderation. Let me entreat you then to resist it with a determined abstemiousness: a remedy, be assured, of all others the most laudable as well as the most salutary. Human nature itself admits the practicability of what I recommend: it is a rule. at least, which I always enjoin my family to observe with respect to myself. 'I hope,' I say to them, 'that should I be attacked with any disorder, I shall desire nothing of which I ought either to be ashamed or have reason to repent; however, if my distemper should prevail over my resolution, I forbid that anything be given me but by the consent of my physicians; and I shall resent your compliance with me in things improper as much as another man would their refusal.' I once had a most violent fever; when the fit was a little abated, and I had been anointed,* my physician offered me something to drink; I held out my hand, desiring he would first feel my pulse, and upon his not seeming quite satisfied, I instantly returned the cup, though it was just at my lips. Afterwards, when I was preparing to go into the bath, twenty days from the first attack of my illness, perceiving the physicians whispering together, I enquired what they were saying. They replied they were of opinion I may possibly bathe with safety, however that they were not without some suspicion of risk. 'What need is there,' said I, 'of my taking a bath at all?' And so, with perfect calmness and tranquillity, I gave up

* Unction was much esteemed and prescribed by the ancients. Celsus expressly recommends it in the remission of acute distempers: '*ungi leniterque pertractari corpus, etiam in acutis et recentibus morbis oportet; in remissione tamen,*' &c. Celsi Med. ed. Almeloveen, p. 88. *M.*

a pleasure I was upon the point of enjoying, and abstained from the bath as serenely and composedly as though I were going into it. I mention this, not only by way of enforcing my advice by example, but also that this letter may be a sort of tie upon me to persevere in the same resolute abstinence for the future. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Justus.

How do you reconcile your assuring me that you have no leisure from business, and your expressing at the same time an earnest desire to see my works; upon which even the idle will scarce bestow some of their useless hours? I will not, then, break in upon your occupations during this summer season; but when the return of winter shall render it probable that your evenings, at least, may be free, I will look over my trifles to see what I have most worth showing you. In the meanwhile, I shall be well satisfied if my letters are not troublesome; as I suspect they are, and therefore shorten them. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* Praesens.

Are you, then, determined to pass your whole time between Lucania * and Campania? † Your answer, I suppose, will be, 'Lucania is my own native country, and Campania my wife's.' This, I admit, may justify a long absence, but I cannot allow it as a reason for a perpetual one. But are you resolved in good earnest never to return to Rome, that theatre of dignities, preferment, and friendly connections of every sort? How long are you obstinately bent upon living your own master, and sleeping and rising just when you think proper? Will you never change your undress for town attire, but spend your whole days in easy freedom? It is time, however, you should revisit our bustling scene, were it only that your rural pleasures may not pall by satiety: appear at the levees of the great, that you may

* Comprehending the Basilicata, a province in Naples. *M.*

† Now called Campagna di Roma. See book vi. letter iv. note †. *M.*

enjoy the same honour yourself with more satisfaction; and mix in our crowd, that you may have a keener relish for the charms of solitude. But am I not imprudently retarding the friend I would recall? it is these very circumstances, perhaps, that induce you every day more and more to wrap yourself up in retirement. All, however, I wish to prevail with you is only to intermit, not to renounce, the charms of solitude. If I were to invite you to a feast, as I would blend sharp and pungent dishes with those of a more luscious kind, in order to revive your appetite by the one, which had been cloyed and blunted by the other, so I now advise you to season the sweetnesses of life with occasional acids, so to speak. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* PONTIUS.

You have read, you say, my hendecasyllabics, and are desirous to know what first induced a man of my gravity (as you are pleased to call me, though in truth I am only not a trifler) to write verses. To go back, then, to my earliest years, I had always an inclination to poetry, insomuch that when I was fourteen years of age, I composed a tragedy in Greek. 'What sort of a one?' do you ask. I really don't know; all I remember of it is that it was called a tragedy. Some time after this, on my return from the army, being detained in the island of Icaria* by contrary winds, I wrote some Latin elegies on the self-same island and sea. I have since made some attempts in the heroic kind; but these are the first hendecasyllabics I ever composed; and the following accident gave them birth. The treatise of Asinius Gallus was read to me one day at Laurentum, in which he draws a comparison between his father and Cicero, and cites an epigram of Tully's on his favourite Tiro. Upon retiring to take my afternoon's nap (for it was summer time), and not being able to sleep, I began to reflect that the greatest orators have been fond of poetry, and by no means despised it as an art. I tried therefore what I could do in this way; and, though I had long disused myself to things of this sort, I wrote down, in a much shorter

* An island in the Archipelago, now called Nicaria. *M.*

time than I could have imagined, the following lines upon the subject which gave me the first hint:

'When Gallus I read, who pretends that his sire
Had far more than Tully poetical fire,
The wisest of men, I perceiv'd held it fit
To temper his wisdom with love and with wit;
For Tully, grave Tully, in amorous strains,
Of the frauds of his paramour Tiro complains;
That faithless to love, and to pleasure untrue,
From his promis'd embrace the arch wanton withdrew.
Then said I to my heart, Why shouldst thou conceal
The sweetest of passions, the love which you feel—
Yes, fly wanton muse, and proclaim it around,
Thy Pliny has lov'd, and his Tiro has found;
The coy one so artful, who sweetly denies,
And from the soft flame, but to heighten it, flies.'

From this I turned to elegy, which I performed with the same ease; and being thus lured on by the facility with which the muses yielded to me, I added others to the number of my productions of this kind. On my return to Rome I showed my performances to some of my friends, who were pleased to approve of them. Afterwards, whenever I had spare time, and particularly when I travelled, I made several other attempts in the poetical line. At length I determined, after the example of many others, to publish a separate volume of these poems, and I have no reason to repent of my resolution. They are much enquired after, and are in everybody's hands; they have even tempted the Greeks to learn our language, who sing them to their harps and lyres. But why am I boasting so? though poets, remember, possess the privilege of raving. Still, I am not giving you my own judgment, but that of others, which, be it right or wrong, I am exceedingly pleased with; and have only to wish that posterity too may be of the same right or wrong way of thinking. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Calpurnia.*

You will not believe what a longing for you possesses me. The chief cause of this is my love; and then we have

* His wife.

not grown used to be apart. So it comes to pass that I lie awake a great part of the night, thinking of you; and that by day, when the hours return at which I was wont to visit you, my feet take me, as it is so truly said, to your chamber; but not finding you there, I return, sick and sad at heart, like an excluded lover. The only time that is free from these torments is when I am being worn out at the bar, and in the suits of my friends. Judge you what must be my life when I find my repose in toil, my solace in wretchedness and anxiety. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* MACRINUS.

A very singular and remarkable accident has happened in the affair of Varenus,* the result of which is yet doubtful. The Bithynians, it is said, have dropped their prosecution of him; being convinced at last that it was rashly undertaken. A deputy from that province is arrived, who has brought with him a decree of their assembly; copies of which he has delivered to Caesar,† and to several of the leading men in Rome, and also to us, the advocates for Varenus. Magnus,‡ nevertheless, whom I mentioned in my last letter to you, persists in his charge, to support which he is incessantly teazing the worthy Nigrinus. This excellent person was counsel for him in his former petition to the consuls, that Varenus might be compelled to produce his accounts. Upon this occasion, as I attended Varenus merely as a friend, I determined to be silent. I thought it highly imprudent for me, as I was appointed his counsel by the senate, to attempt to defend him as an accused person, when it was his business to insist that there was actually no charge subsisting against him. However, when Nigrinus had finished his speech, the consuls turning their eyes upon me, I rose up, and, 'When you shall hear,' I said, 'what the real deputies from the province have to object against the motion of Nigrinus, you will see that my silence was not without just reason.' Upon this Nigrinus asked me, 'To whom are these deputies sent?' I replied, 'To me among others; I have the decree of the

* See book v. letter xx. † Trajan.
‡ One of the Bithynians employed to manage the trial. *M.*

province in my hands.' He returned, 'That is a point which, though it may be clear to you, I am not so well satisfied of.' To this I answered, 'Though it may not be so evident to you, who are concerned to support the accusation, it may be perfectly clear to me, who am on the more favourable side.' Then Polyaenus, the deputy from the province, acquainted the senate with the reasons for superseding the prosecution, but desired it might be without prejudice to Caesar's determination. Magnus answered him; Polyaenus replied; as for myself, I only now and then threw in a word, observing in general a complete silence. For I have learned that upon some occasions it is as much an orator's business to be silent as to speak, and I remember, in some criminal cases, to have done even more service to my clients by a discreet silence than I could have expected from the most carefully prepared speech. To enter into the subject of eloquence is indeed very foreign to the purpose of my letter, yet allow me to give you one instance in proof of my last observation. A certain lady having lost her son suspected that his freedmen, whom he had appointed coheirs with her, were guilty of forging the will and poisoning him. Accordingly she charged them with the fact before the emperor, who directed Julianus Suburanus to try the cause. I was counsel for the defendants, and the case being exceedingly remarkable, and the counsel engaged on both sides of eminent ability, it drew together a very numerous audience. The issue was, the servants being put to the torture, my clients were acquitted. But the mother applied a second time to the emperor, pretending she had discovered some new evidence. Suburanus was therefore directed to hear the cause, and see if she could produce any fresh proofs. Julius Africanus was counsel for the mother, a young man of good parts, but slender experience. He is grandson to the famous orator of that name, of whom it is reported that Passienus Crispus, hearing him one day plead, archly said, 'Very fine, I must confess, very fine; but is all this fine speaking to the purpose?' Julius Africanus, I say, having made a long harangue, and exhausted the portion of time allotted to him, said, 'I beg you, Suburanus, to allow me to add one word more.' When he had concluded, and the eyes of the

whole assembly had been fixed a considerable time upon me, I rose up. 'I would have answered Africanus,' said I, 'if he had added that *one word* he begged leave to do, in which I doubt not he would have told us all that we had not heard before.' I do not remember to have gained so much applause by any speech that I ever made as I did in this instance by making none. Thus the little that I had hitherto said for Varenus was received with the same general approbation. The consuls, agreeably to the request of Polyaenus, reserved the whole affair for the determination of the emperor, whose resolution I impatiently wait for; as that will decide whether I may be entirely secure and easy with respect to Varenus, or must again renew all my trouble and anxiety upon his account. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* SATURNINUS.

Though I had very lately made my acknowledgments to our friend Priscus, yet, since it was your desire, I repeated them with the greatest pleasure. It is most delightful to me to see so much harmony subsist between two such worthy men, whom I tenderly esteem, and that you consider each other's friendship as a mutual obligation. For he professes also on his part to receive great happiness from yours, and, with a very generous contention, endeavours to rival you in that reciprocal affection, which time, I am persuaded, will augment.

I am sorry to find you so taken up with business that you cannot attend to your studies; however, as soon as you shall have compromised (which you say you are upon the point of effecting) one of the causes you mention, and brought the other to a hearing, you will be at leisure to enjoy the retirement of the country; and when you are satiated with that, we may hope to see you back again amongst us. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* PRISCUS.

The letters after letters I receive from our friend Saturninus, expressing his sense of your favours to him, afford me inexpressible satisfaction. May you go on as you have

begun, and continue to cherish an affection for so worthy a man, from whose friendship you will receive an intense and lasting pleasure. For greatly distinguished as he is by every other virtue, he is particularly so by his invariable attachment to his friends. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Tuscus.

You desire my opinion as to the method of study you should pursue, in that retirement to which you have long since withdrawn. In the first place, then, I look upon it as a very advantageous practice (and it is what many recommend) to translate either from Greek into Latin or from Latin into Greek. By this means you acquire propriety and dignity of expression, and a variety of beautiful figures, and an ease and strength of exposition, and in the imitation of the best models a facility of creating such models for yourself. Besides, those things which you may possibly have overlooked in an ordinary reading over cannot escape you in translating: and this method will also enlarge your knowledge, and improve your judgment. It may not be amiss, after you have read an author, to turn, as it were, his rival, and attempt something of your own upon the same topic, and then make a careful comparison between your performance and his, in order to see in what points either you or he may be the happier. You may congratulate yourself indeed if you shall find in some things that you have the advantage of him, while it will be a great mortification if he is always superior. You may sometimes select very famous passages and compete with what you select. The competition is daring enough, but, as it is private, cannot be called impudent. Not but that we have seen instances of persons who have publicly entered this sort of lists with great credit to themselves, and, while they did not despair of overtaking, have gloriously outstripped those whom they thought it sufficient honour to follow. A speech no longer fresh in your memory, you may take up again. You will find plenty in it to leave unaltered, but still more to reject; you will add anew thought here, and alter another there.

It is a laborious and tedious task, I own, thus to reenflame the mind after the first heat is over, to recover an impulse when its force has been checked and spent, and, worse than all, to put new limbs into a body already complete without disturbing the old; but the advantage attending this method will overbalance the difficulty. I know the bent of your present attention is directed towards the eloquence of the bar; but I would not for that reason advise you never to quit the polemic, if I may so call it, and contentious style. As land is improved by sowing it with various seeds, constantly changed, so is the mind by exercising it now with this subject of study, now with that. I would recommend you, therefore, sometimes to take a subject from history, and you might give more care to the composition of your letters. For it frequently happens that in pleading one has occasion to make use not only of historical, but even poetical, styles of description; and then from letters you acquire a concise and simple mode of expression. You will do quite right again in refreshing yourself with poetry: when I say so, I do not mean that species of poetry which turns upon subjects of great length and continuity (*such* being suitable only for persons of leisure), but those little pieces of the sprightly kind of poesy, which serve as proper reliefs to, and are consistent with, employments of every sort. They commonly go under the title of *poetical amusements;* but these amusements have sometimes gained their authors as much reputation as works of a more serious nature; and thus (for while I am exhorting you to poetry, why should I not turn poet myself?)

> 'As yielding wax the artist's skill commands,
> Submissive shap'd beneath his forming hands;
> Now dreadful stands in arms a Mars confest;
> Or now with Venus' softer air imprest;
> A wanton Cupid now the mould belies;
> Now shines, severely chaste, a Pallas wife:
> As not alone to quench the raging flame,
> The sacred fountain pours her friendly stream;
> But sweetly gliding through the flow'ry green,
> Spreads glad refreshment o'er the smiling scene:
> So, form'd by science, should the ductile mind
> Receive, distinct, each various art refin'd.'

In this manner the greatest men, as well as the greatest

orators, used either to exercise or amuse themselves, or rather indeed did both. It is surprising how much the mind is enlivened and refreshed by these little poetical compositions, as they turn upon love, hatred, satire, tenderness, politeness, and everything, in short, that concerns life and the affairs of the world. Besides, the same advantage attends these, as every other sort of poems, that we turn from them to prose with so much the more pleasure after having experienced the difficulty of being constrained and fettered by metre. And now, perhaps, I have troubled you upon this subject longer than you desired; however, there is one thing I have left out: I have not told you what kind of authors you should read; though indeed that was sufficiently implied when I told you on what you should write. Remember to be careful in your choice of authors of every kind: for, as it has been well observed, 'though we should read much, we should not read many books.'* Who those authors are, is so

* Thus the noble and polite moralist, speaking of the influence which our reading has upon our *taste* and *manners*, thinks it imporper 'to call a man *well-read*, who reads many authors; since he must of necessity have more ill models than good: and be more stuffed with bombast, ill fancy, and wry thought, than filled with solid sense and just imagination.' (Charact. v. i. 142.) When the Goths overran Greece, the libraries escaped their destruction, by a notion which some of their leaders industriously propagated among them, that it would be more for their interest to leave those spoils untouched to their enemies; as being proper to enervate their minds, and amuse them with vain and idle speculations. Truth perhaps has been less a gainer by this multiplicity of books than error; and it may be a question whether the excellent models which have been delivered down to us from antiqu ty, together with those few which modern times have produced, by any means balance the immoderate weight which must be thrown into the opposite scale of writers. The truth is, though we may be learned by other men's reflections, wise we can only be by our own: and the maxim here recommended by Pliny would well deserve the attention of the studious, though no other inconvenience attended the reading of many books than that which Sir William Temple apprehends from it: the lessening the force and growth of a man's own genius. For it may be justly doubted, with that ingenious author, 'whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own, or hinder the motion or agitation of them, from which all invention arises; as heaping on wood, or too many sticks, or too close together, suppresses, and sometimes quite extinguishes, a little spark, that would otherwise have grown up to a noble flame.' (Essay on Learning, v. i. 158.) *M.*

clearly settled, and so generally known, that I need not particularly specify them; besides, I have already extended this letter to such an immoderate length that, while suggesting how you ought to study, I have, I fear, been actually interrupting your studies. I will here resign you therefore to your tablets, either to resume the studies in which you were before engaged or to enter upon some of those I have recommended. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* MACRINUS.

As I always love to know the end of a story when I have heard the beginning, so, I imagine, you will be glad to be informed of the rest of the cause between the Bithynians and Varenus. It was pleaded before the emperor by Polyaenus on one side, and Magnus on the other. When Caesar had heard both, 'Neither party,' said he, 'shall have reason to complain of the delay; but I will take care to inform myself of the real sentiments of the province.' In the meanwhile, Varenus has gained a very considerable point; for can anything make the justness of his accusation appear more doubtful than that it is a question whether he is accused at all? We have only to wish that the province may not again approve of the measure which, it is said, it now condemns, and repent of its former repentance. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* FABATUS (*his wife's grandfather*).

You are surprised, I find, that my share of five-twelfths of the estate which lately fell to me, and which I had directed to be sold to the best bidder, should have been disposed of by my freedman Hermes to Corellia (without putting it up to auction) at the rate of seven hundred thousand sesterces* for the whole. And as you think it might have fetched nine hundred thousand,† you are so much the more desirous to know whether I am inclined to ratify what he has done. I am; and listen, while I tell

* About £5460. † About £7030.

you why, for I hope that not only you will approve, but also that my fellow-coheirs will excuse me for having, upon a motive of superior obligation, separated my interest from theirs. I have the highest esteem for Corellia, both as the sister of Rufus, whose memory will always be a sacred one to me, and as my mother's intimate friend. Besides, that excellent man Minutius Tuscus, her husband, has every claim to my affection that a long friendship can give him; as there was likewise the closest intimacy between her son and me, so much so indeed that I fixed upon him to preside at the games which I exhibited when I was elected praetor. This lady, when I was last in the country, expressed a strong desire for some place upon the borders of our lake of Comum; I therefore made her an offer, at her own price, of any part of my land there, except what came to me from my father and mother; for that I could not consent to part with, even to Corellia, and accordingly when the inheritance in question fell to me, I wrote to let her know it was to be sold. This letter I sent by Hermes, who, upon her requesting him that he would immediately make over to her my proportion of it, consented. Am I not then obliged to confirm what my freedman has thus done in pursuance of my inclinations? I have only to entreat my fellow-coheirs that they will not take it ill at my hands that I have made a separate sale of what I had certainly a right to dispose of. They are not bound in any way to follow my example, since they have not the same connections with Corellia. They are at full liberty therefore to be guided by interest, which in my own case I chose to sacrifice to friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Minicius.

I have been so much the longer in sending you the petition which I have drawn up at your request for the use of your or rather I should say *our* friend (for what is there that we do not possess in common?) that you might have no time to correct, that is, to spoil it. After all, whether you may or may not find time for that purpose, I know not; but of this I am sure, you will most certainly spoil it,

if 'agreeably to the very *delicate* taste of your very *refined* critics,' you should retrench the very best passages. I shall forgive you, however, if you should, and shall, upon some future occasion, successfully make use of what your fastidious delicacy rejects; as I doubt not to receive your applause for what you will find annotated and interlined. I suspected you would call everything unnatural and bombast which is elevated and sonorous, I have thought proper therefore for your ease and convenience to vary the phrase, condensing and pruning, or rather, indeed, lowering and impoverishing it; though you, I know (for why should I not rally your delicate taste?), will think it an improvement. Thus far, in order to make you smile in the midst of your serious occupations; but without doubt, I am very serious indeed in what I am going to add: I expect to be reimbursed the expense I have been put to in sending a courier express with this petition. Now are you not disposed to condemn it, not only in some of its parts, but in the whole, and insist that you ought not to pay for a thing which is absolutely valueless? Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* FEROX.

I find from your letter that you do, and do not, study. This will appear a little enigmatical until I explain it: you expressly say indeed that you have bid adieu to study; but such a vein of elegance runs through your whole letter that it is impossible it should have been composed without much thought: unless you are privileged beyond the rest of mankind, and can express such admirable sentiments, in so polished a style, carelessly and with a flowing pen. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* CORELLIA.

You are truly generous to desire and insist that I take for my share of the estate you purchased of me, not after the rate of seven hundred thousand sesterces* for the

* See the 11th letter of this book.

whole, as my freedman sold it to you; but in the proportion of nine hundred thousand, agreeably to what you gave to the farmers of the twentieths * for their part. But I must desire and insist in my turn that you would consider not only what is suitable to your character, but what is worthy of mine; and that you would suffer me to oppose your inclination in this single instance, with the same warmth that I obey it in all others. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* Saturninus.

You ask me *how I spend my time?* You know how my public duties take up a good part of it; what remains I devote to the service of my friends, and sometimes to my books; and although I will not venture to affirm it would be better, I am sure it would be happier, if I could say that the latter not only *sometimes*, but altogether engage me. I should be concerned to hear that your occupations are of the sort least agreeable to you, if I did not know you are busied in the noblest offices; as nothing can be more praiseworthy than to be active in the interest of one's country, and settling controversies among one's friends.

I felt sure you would find the company of our friend Priscus extremely agreeable, as I know the amiable simplicity and politeness of his manners; but I had yet to learn (what I had the pleasure of being informed of by your letter) that he so obligingly remembers the services I have done him. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* Fabatus.

Calestrius Tiro, to whom I am united by every public and private connection, is in the number of my most intimate friends. We served together in the army, and were

* Augustus imposed a tax of the twentieth part of all legacies and inheritances, which he appropriated to the support of the army. This was deemed a heavy imposition, and accordingly it was eased in several points by succeeding emperors, particularly by Trajan, as appears from our author's noble panegyric upon him (Sect. 37, &c.), but it was not wholly abolished till the time of Antoninus Pius. *M.*

both of us quaestors * at the same time as Caesar. He got the start of me, indeed, in the tribunate, by the privilege which the law gives to those who have children; † but I overtook him in the praetorship by the indulgence of the emperor, who dispensed with my wanting a year of the legal age for that office. I frequently retire with him to his country villas, as he often takes the benefit of change of air at mine. He is now appointed proconsul of Baetica, and he proposes to pass through Ticinum,‡ on his way to that province. I hope, and indeed am well assured, I can easily prevail with him to turn out of his road to your house if you should have an inclination to make any of those slaves entirely free before a magistrate to whom you have already given manumission § in the presence of your friends. You need be under no apprehension that he will look upon this as a trouble; I am sure he would willingly travel round the world for my sake. Do lay aside all scruple, then, and only consider what will be most agreeable to yourself; for he takes just as much pleasure in executing my commands as I do in executing yours. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* CELER.

Every author has his particular reasons for reciting his works; mine, I have often said, are, in order, if any error should have escaped my own observation (as no doubt they do escape it sometimes), to have it pointed out to me. I cannot therefore but be surprised to find (what your letter assures me) that there are some who blame me for reciting

* An office resembling that of our secretary of state. *M.*

† A law at first proposed by Augustus, but which afterwards with several alterations passed in the consulship of Papius and Poppeas, A.U. 762; in which, amongst other things, it was enacted, 'That all magistrates should take precedence according to the number of their children; that in elections those candidates should be preferred who had the most numerous offspring; and that any person might stand sooner than ordinary for an office if he had as many children as he wanted years to be capable of bearing such a dignity.' Vid. Lipsii Excurs. ad Tacit. An. i. 3. *M.*

‡ Pavia.

§ This last method only discharged them from servitude, but did not entitle them to the privileges of complete freedom. *M.*

my speeches: unless, perhaps, they are of opinion that this is the single species of composition that ought to be held exempt from any correction. If so, I would willingly ask them why they allow (if indeed they do allow) that history may be recited, since it is a work which ought to be devoted to truth, not ostentation? or why tragedy, as it is composed for action and the stage, not for being read to a private audience? or lyric poetry, as it is not a reader, but a chorus of voices and instruments that it requires? They will reply, perhaps, that in the instances referred to custom has made the practice in question usual: I should be glad to know, then, if they think the person who first introduced this practice is to be condemned? Besides the rehearsal of speeches is no unprecedented thing either with us or the Grecians. Still, perhaps, they will insist that it can answer no purpose to recite a speech which has already been delivered. True; if one were immediately to repeat the very same speech word for word, and to the very same audience; but if you make several additions and alterations; if your audience is composed partly of the same, and partly of different persons, and the recital is at some distance of time, why is there less propriety in rehearsing your speech than in publishing it? 'But it is difficult,' the objectors urge, 'to give satisfaction to an audience by the mere recital of a speech;' *that* is a consideration which concerns the particular skill and pains of the person who rehearses, but by no means holds good against recitation in general. The truth is, it is not whilst I am reading, but when I am read, that I aim at approbation; and upon this principle I omit no sort of correction. In the first place, I frequently go carefully over what I have written, by myself, after this I read it out to two or three friends, and then give it to others to make their remarks. If after this I have any doubt concerning the justness of their observations, I carefully weigh them again with a friend or two; and, last of all, I recite them to a larger audience, then is the time, believe me, when I correct most energetically and unsparingly; for my care and attention rise in proportion to my anxiety; as nothing renders the judgment so acute to detect error as that deference, modesty, and diffidence one feels upon those occasions. For tell me,

would you not be infinitely less affected were you to speak before a single person only, though ever so learned, than before a numerous assembly, even though composed of none but illiterate people? When you rise up to plead, are you not at that juncture, above all others, most self-distrustful? and do you not wish, I will not say some particular parts only, but that the whole arrangement of your intended speech were altered? especially if the concourse should be large in which you are to speak? for there is something even in a low and vulgar audience that strikes one with awe. And if you suspect you are not well received at the first opening of your speech, do you not find all your energy relaxed, and feel yourself ready to give way? The reason I imagine to be that there is a certain weight of collective opinion in a multitude, and although each individual judgment is, perhaps, of little value, yet when united it becomes considerable. Accordingly, Pomponius Secundus, the famous tragic poet, whenever some very intimate friend and he differed about the retaining or rejecting anything in his writings, used to say, 'I appeal * to the people;' and thus, by their silence or applause, adopted either his own or his friend's opinion; such was the deference he paid to the popular judgment! † Whether justly

* There is a kind of witticism in this expression, which will be lost to the mere English reader, unless he be informed that the Romans had a privilege, confirmed to them by several laws which passed in the earlier ages of the republic, of appealing from the decisions of the magistrates to the general assembly of the people: and they did so in the form of words which Pomponius here applies to a different purpose. *M.*

† However unsafe in general, an appeal to the vulgar notions may be, there are yet some cases in which their sentiments have ever been received by the judicious as decisive. The merit of performances in the persuasive or imitative arts, so far as the mere raising or representing the passions are concerned, will best be tried by the effect they produce in plain and unbiassed minds: for (as Tully observes) 'that artist who has nature for his object must certainly fall short of the truth of his art, where nature is not moved.'[1] The custom which prevailed among the Romans of reciting their works of genius in the porticoes and places of public resort took its rise, probably, from the same notion of a general and innate taste being implanted in all mankind of what is just and natural in the moving arts. It was upon this principle likewise that the great masters in painting and statuary in ancient

[1] De Orat. lib. i.

or not, is no concern of mine, as I am not in the habit of reciting my works publicly, but only to a select circle, whose presence I respect, and whose judgment I value; in a word, whose opinions I attend to as if they were so many individuals I had separately consulted, at the same time that I stand in as much awe before them as I should before the most numerous assembly. What Cicero says of composing will, in my opinion, hold true of the dread we have of the public: 'Fear is the most rigid critic imaginable.' The very thought of reciting, the very entrance into an assembly, and the agitated concern when one is there; each of these circumstances tends to improve and perfect an author's performance. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot repent of a practice which I have found by experience so exceedingly useful; and am so far from being discouraged by the trifling objections of these censors that I request you would point out to me if there is yet any other kind of correction, that I may also adopt it; for nothing can sufficiently satisfy my anxiety to render my compositions perfect. I reflect what an undertaking it is resigning any work into the hands of the public; and I cannot but be persuaded that frequent revisals, and many consultations, must go to the perfecting of a performance, which one desires should universally and for ever please. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* Caninius.

You ask my advice as to how you should settle the sum of money which you have presented to our countrymen for

Greece exhibited their performances to public view, and corrected them by the popular feelings. There is a remarkable story told of Annibal Carrachi, which shows he received the same standard of merit. He took notice that a famous picture of Domenichino's, representing the flagellation of St. Andrew, made a very strong impression upon an old woman, who at the same time seemed little affected with another picture of a martyrdom done by Guido, which was placed near it. A debate afterwards happening about the merit of these two performances, Carrachi decided the dispute by only telling this fact Thus, as the poet observes,

> . . . . 'The people's voice is odd,
> It is, and it is not, the voice of God.'
> (Pope.) *M.*

an annual festival, so as to secure the just application of it after your death. Your question is prompted by truly generous feeling; but the answer is not very easy. Should you pay down the money to the community, the danger is that it may be squandered away. If you settle lands for that purpose, they will probably be neglected, as those of the public usually are. Upon the whole, then, I can think of no method more eligible than what I myself pursued in a parallel instance. Intending to give five hundred thousand sesterces * for the maintenance of children of both sexes who were born of good families, I made a fictitious sale to the public agent of an estate in land which was worth considerably more, who reconveyed it back to me, charged with a yearly rent of thirty thousand sesterces.† By this means the principal was secured to the community, at the same time that the interest was certain, and the estate itself (as it was of much greater value than the rent charged upon it) was always sure of finding a tenant. I am well aware, indeed, that by this method I have actually given more than I appear to have done, as the value of the fairest estate will be considerably diminished by the incumbrance with which it is charged. But the interest of the public ought always to take place of every private consideration, as what is eternal is to be preferred to what is mortal; and one's benefactions ought to be a matter of much more careful consideration than one's own gains. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* PRISCUS.

The illness of my friend Fannia gives me great concern. She contracted it during her attendance on Junia, one of the Vestal virgins, engaging in this good office at first voluntarily, Junia being her relation, and afterwards being

* About £3900.

† About £240. It should seem by this passage that the rate of interest of money upon mortgage among the Romans in Pliny's time, or rather at the time when he wrote this letter (for no doubt it varied with public circumstances), was at 6 per cent. as in the common way of loan; upon personal security, it appears, from the sixty-second letter of the tenth book, to have been so high as 12 per cent. *M.*

appointed to it by an order from the college of priests: for these virgins, when excessive ill-health renders it necessary to remove them from the temple of Vesta, are always delivered over to the care and custody of some venerable matron. It was owing to her assiduity in the execution of this charge that she contracted her present dangerous disorder, which is a continual fever, attended with a cough that increases daily. She is extremely emaciated, and every part of her seems in a total decay except her spirits: those, indeed, she fully keeps up; and in a way altogether worthy the wife of Helvidius, and the daughter of Thrasea. In all other respects there is such a falling away that I am more than apprehensive upon her account; I am deeply afflicted. I grieve, my friend, that so excellent a woman is going to be removed from the eyes of the world, which will never, perhaps, again behold her equal. So pure she is, so pious, so wise and prudent, so brave and steadfast! Twice she followed her husband into exile, and the third time she was banished herself upon his account. For Senecio, when arraigned for writing the life of Helvidius, having said in his defence that he composed that work at the request of Fannia, Metius Carus, with a stern and threatening air, asked her whether she had made that request, and she replied, 'I made it.' Did she supply him likewise with materials for the purpose? 'I did.' Was her mother privy to this transaction? 'She was not.' In short, throughout her whole examination, not a word escaped her which betrayed the smallest fear. On the contrary, she had preserved a copy of those very books which the senate, over-awed by the tyranny of the times, had ordered to be suppressed, and at the same time the effects of the author to be confiscated, and carried with her into exile the very cause of her exile. How pleasing she is, how courteous, and (what is granted to few) no less loveable than worthy of all esteem and admiration! Will she hereafter be pointed out as a model to all wives; and perhaps be esteemed worthy of being set forth as an example of fortitude even to our sex; since, while we still have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with her, we contemplate her with the same admiration, as those

heroines who are celebrated in ancient story? For myself, I confess, I cannot but tremble for this illustrious house, which seems shaken to its very foundations, and ready to fall; for though she will leave descendants behind her, yet what a height of virtue must they attain, what glorious deeds must they perform, ere the world will be persuaded that she was not the last of her family! It is an additional affliction and anguish to me that by her death I seem to lose her mother a second time; that worthy mother (and what can I say higher in her praise?) of so noble a woman! who, as she was restored to me in her daughter, so she will now again be taken from me, and the loss of Fannia will thus pierce my heart at once with a fresh, and at the same time re-opened, wound. I so truly loved and honoured them both, that I know not which I loved the best; a point they desired might ever remain undetermined. In their prosperity and their adversity I did them every kindness in my power, and was their comforter in exile, as well as their avenger at their return. But I have not yet paid them what I owe, and am so much the more solicitous for the recovery of this lady, that I may have time to discharge my debt to her. Such is the anxiety and sorrow under which I write this letter! But if some divine power should happily turn it into joy, I shall not complain of the alarms I now suffer. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* TACITUS.

I have read your book through, and have marked as carefully as I could the passages I think should be altered, and those which I am of opinion might be left out. It is as habitual to me to speak truth as it is agreeable to you to hear it, and indeed none are more patient of censure than those who have the best claim to applause. I now expect, in return, your observations upon the treatise of mine I lately sent you. Happy, noble interchange! and how delightful it is to think that posterity, if it shall concern itself at all about us, will not cease to mention with what harmony, what freedom, what mutual confidence, we lived together! It will be an instance as remarkable as

it is uncommon, that two persons nearly of the same age and rank, and of some literary reputation (for since I join myself with you, I am obliged to speak of you with more reserve), should thus mutually assist and promote each other's studies. When I was a very young man, and you in the prime of your glory and reputation, I ardently desired to follow in your steps, and to be considered, as well as really to come, next in character to you, though with a long interval between! And though there were, at that time, in Rome, many men of the most eminent abilities, yet you, of all others, appeared to me most suitable for imitation, most worthy of imitation. I am the more rejoiced, then, to find that, in all companies where learning is the topic of conversation, we are always mentioned together, and that my name immediately follows yours. It is true there are some who prefer one of us, perhaps, to the other; but it makes not the slightest difference to me in what order we are placed, so long as that we stand together; for, in my estimation, whoever is next to you must necessarily precede every one else. And you ought to have noticed too that in wills,* unless by chance in the case of particular friendship to either of us, we are always equally considered, and that the legacies bequeathed to us are generally the same, both in number and value. Since, then, we are thus closely linked together by our studies, manners, reputation, and even those last instances of human judgment, should not these things all tend to increase the warmth of our affection for each other. Farewell.

* 'It was the peculiar custom of Rome, for the clients and dependents of families, to bequeath at their death to their patrons some considerable part of their estates, as the most effectual testimony of their respect and gratitude; and the more a man received in this way, the more it redounded to his credit. Thus Cicero mentions it to the honour of Lucullus, that, while he governed Asia as proconsul, many great estates were left to him by will. And Nepos tells us, in praise of Atticus, that he succeeded to many inheritances of the same kind bequeathed to him on no other account than of his friendly and amiable temper. Cicero, when he was falsely reproached by Antony with being neglected on these occasions, declared in his reply, that he had gained from this single article about two hundred thousand pounds.' Middleton's Life of Tully, v. ii. 514. *M.*

LETTER XXI. *To* CORNUTUS.

I obey your commands, my dearest colleague, and consult the weakness of my eyes. Accordingly I came hither in a covered litter, in which I was as much sheltered as if I had been in my own room. I forbear too (with reluctance indeed, however I do forbear) both writing and reading, and study only with my ears. By drawing the curtains of my room, I darken it, without making it quite dark, and when I walk in my covered portico, I close the lower row of windows, and in this way enjoy as much shade as light. Thus I accustom myself to the light, by degrees. The bath doing me good in this case, I allow myself it, just as I allow myself wine because it does not hurt me; but in great moderation. These are my habits you know, but particularly now that I have one * who is always by me, to look after me. I received the fowl, with great pleasure as coming from you; and weak as my eyes still are, they are strong enough, however, to see what a fine plump one it is. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* FALCO.

You will not wonder at my so earnestly pressing you to confer the tribunate upon my friend, when you shall be informed who and what he is; and as you have engaged me your promise in his favour, I may now acquaint you with his name and character. It is Cornelius Minutianus, who both in rank and desert is the ornament of that province to which I owe my birth. He is of noble family and abundant means, and yet he pursues his studies with as much application as if the necessity of his circumstances required it. He is a most upright judge, a most strenuous advocate, a most faithful friend. You will look upon the obligation as done to yourself when you shall have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the man who (not to speak in too lofty terms of one so modest in the extreme) is equal to all the honours and titles that can be conferred upon him. Farewell.

* Meaning his wife, perhaps, or his physician. *M.*

LETTER XXIII. *To* Fabatus (*his wife's grandfather*).

I am sincerely glad you find yourself so far recovered as to be able to meet Tiro at Mediolanum; * but that you may continue as strong, let me beg of you to spare yourself a fatigue so improper for a man of your years. I must insist then that you wait for him at Comum, and that you do not stir out of your own house, nor even out of your chamber, to receive him. As I love him with the affection of a brother, it would be unreasonable he should expect from the person whom I honour as my parent a point of ceremony which he would spare his own. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV. *To* Geminius.

Numidia Quadratilla is dead, having almost reached her eightieth year. She enjoyed, up to her last illness, uninterrupted good health, and was unusually stout and robust for one of her sex. She has left a very prudent will, having disposed of two-thirds of her estate to her grandson, and the rest to her grand-daughter. The young lady I know very slightly, but the grandson is one of my most intimate friends. He is a remarkable young man, and his merit entitles him to the affection of a relation, even where his blood does not. Notwithstanding his remarkable personal beauty, he escaped every malicious imputation both whilst a boy and when a youth: he was a husband at four-and-twenty, and would have been a father if Providence had not disappointed his hopes. He lived in the family with his grandmother, who was exceedingly devoted to the pleasures of the town, yet observed great severity of conduct himself, while always perfectly deferential and submissive to her. She retained a set of pantomimes,† and was an encourager of this class of people to a

* Milan.

† These pantomimes were, as their name imports, universal mimics, whose humour consisted in imitating the peculiar manner and gesture of particular persons. They were at first introduced upon the stage, as Scaliger supposes, to succeed the chorus and comedies, and divert the audience with apish postures and antic dances. In after times those interludes became distinct entertainments, and were exhibited apart

degree inconsistent with one of her sex and rank. But Quadratus never appeared at these entertainments, whether she exhibited them in the theatre or in her own house; nor indeed did she require him to be present. I once heard her say, when she was recommending to me the supervision of her grandson's studies, that it was her custom, in order to pass away some of those unemployed hours with which female life abounds, to amuse herself with playing at chess,* or seeing the mimicry of her pantomimes;

from other plays. But the use of these pantomimes was not confined to the stage only, for Suetonius informs us, they were introduced in funeral solemnities, in order to represent the manner of the deceased. *M.*

* This game, among the Romans, seems to have been much of the same nature with modern chess. Their men, which they called *calculi* or *latrunculi*, were made sometimes of wax, and sometimes of glass, and were distinguished by black and white colours. The invention of it has been carried by some so high as the siege of Troy, but Peter Texeiras, in his history of Persia (as quoted by Pitiscus in his Lex. Antiq. Rom.), imagines it to be of Persian original, because, says he, in all countries where this game is played, the names of the men are either the same with, or plainly a corruption of those given to them in the Persian language. Allusions to this game are frequent in the classic writers; but the fullest description of it is contained in the following lines, taken from the little poem addressed to Piso, which is to be found at the end of some editions of Lucan, and is generally ascribed to that author:

'*Te si forte juvat, studiorum pondere fessum,*
Non languere tamen, lususque movere per artem,
Callidiore modo Tabula variatur aperta
Calculus, et vitreo peraguntur milite bella,
Ut niveus nigros, nunc et niger alliget albos.
Sed tibi quis non terga dedit? quis te duce cessit
Calculus? aut quis non periturus perdidit hostem?
Mille modis acies tua dimicat: ille petentem
Dum fugit, ipse rapit: longo venit ille recessu
Qui stetit in speculis: hic se committere rixae
Audet, et in praedam venientem decipit hostem:
Ancipites subit ille moras, similisque ligato
Obligat ipse duos: hic ad majora movetur,
Ut citus et fracta prorumpat in agmina mandra,
Clausaque dejecto populatur moenia vallo.
Interea, sectis quamvis acerrima surgunt
Praelia militibus, plena tamen ipse phalange,
Aut etiam pauco spoliata milite vincis,
Et tibi captivae resonat manus utraque turbae.'

Ad Pison. Poëmation.

[TRANSLATION.

but that, whenever she engaged in either of those amusements, she constantly sent away her grandson to his studies: she appeared to me to act thus as much out of reverence for the youth as from affection. I was a good deal surprised, as I am sure you will be too, at what he told me the last time the Pontifical * games were exhibited. As we were coming out of the theatre together, where we had been entertained with a show of these pantomimes, 'Do you know,' said he, 'to-day is the first time I ever saw my grandmother's freedman dance?' Such was the grandson's speech! while a set of men of a far different stamp, in order to do honour to Quadratilla (I am ashamed to call it *honour*), were running up and down the theatre, pretend-

TRANSLATION.

'When, to relieve the labours of thy mind,
Thou turn'st from deep research in arts refin'd,
Not in soft indolence you waste the hour,
But happier genius still exerts its pow'r;
To mimic war the radiant troops are led,
And martial ranks the varied table spread;
There sable bands, and here a snow-white train,
With doubtful fate of war the fight maintain.
But who with thee shall dare dispute the field?
Led by thy hand, what warrior knows to yield?
Or if he fall, he falls with glorious pride,
His vanquished foe extended by his side.
Unnumber'd stratagems thy forces try:
Now artful feign, and only feign, to fly.
Now boldly rushes 'midst the ranks of war
The chief who view'd the slaught'ring scene from far.
This, bravely daring in the arduous toil,
Repels the host advancing to the spoil,
While cautious *that* moves dreadful on and slow,
And fraudful meditates the certain blow;
What though in guise a slave he seems in chains,
Two captives He in durance close detains.
But see yon hero with impetuous haste
Bursts through the ranks, and lays the ramparts waste.
While thus the mighty battle glows around,
And prostrate chiefs bestrow the well-fought ground,
Full and unbroken lo! thy squadrons stand,
Or scarce one warrior lost of thy command;
The captive crowds thy victory proclaim,
And foes confess thy undisputed fame.' *M.*

* The priests, as well as other magistrates, exhibited public games to the people when they entered upon their office. *M.*

ing to be struck with the utmost admiration and rapture at the performances of those pantomimes, and then imitating in musical chant the mien and manner of their lady patroness. But now all the reward they have got, in return for their theatrical performances, is just a few trivial legacies, which they have the mortification to receive from an heir who was never so much as present at these shows.—I send you this account, knowing you do not dislike hearing town news, and because, too, when any occurrence has given me pleasure, I love to renew it again by relating it. And indeed this instance of affection in Quadratilla, and the honour done therein to that excellent youth her grandson, has afforded me a very sensible satisfaction; as I extremely rejoice that the house which once belonged to Cassius,* the founder and chief of the Cassian school, is come into the possession of one no less considerable than its former master. For my friend will fill it and become it as he ought, and its ancient dignity, lustre, and glory will again revive under Quadratus, who, I am persuaded, will prove as eminent an orator as Cassius was a lawyer. Farewell.

LETTER XXV. *To* RUFUS.

O the numbers of learned men modesty conceals, or love of retirement withdraws from public fame! and yet when we are going to speak or recite in public, it is the judgment only of professed critics we stand in awe of: whereas those who cultivate learning quietly and to themselves have in so far a higher claim to regard in that they pay a tribute of silent reverence to whatever is great in works of genius: an observation which I give you upon experience Terentius Junior having gone through the military duties suitable to a person of equestrian rank, and discharged with great integrity the post of receiver-general of the revenues in Narbonensian Gaul,† retired to his estate,

* A famous lawyer who flourished in the reign of the emperor Claudius: those who followed his opinions were said to be Cassians, or of the school of Cassius. *M.*

† One of the four principal divisions of ancient Gaul; it extended

preferring the enjoyment of an uninterrupted tranquillity to those honours that awaited his services. He invited me lately to his house, where, looking upon him only as a worthy head of a family, and an industrious farmer, I started such topics as I imagined him to be most versed in. But he soon turned the conversation, entering with considerable display of learning upon subjects of literature. With what purity and delicacy did he express himself in Latin and Greek! for he is such a master of both that whichever he speaks seems to be the language he particularly excels in. How extensive and varied in his reading! how tenacious his memory! You would not imagine him the inhabitant of an ignorant country village, but of polite Athens herself. In short, his conversation has increased my anxiety about my works, and taught me to revere the judgment of these retired country gentlemen as much as that of more known and distinguished literati. Let me persuade you to consider them in the same light; for, believe me, upon a careful observation, you will find that as in the army the best soldiers, so in literature, the best scholars are often concealed under the most uncouth appearances. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI. *To* Maximus.

The lingering disorder of a friend of mine gave me occasion lately to reflect that we are never so good as when oppressed with illness. Where is the sick man who is either solicited by avarice or inflamed with lust? At such a season he is neither a slave of love nor the fool of ambition; wealth he utterly disregards, and is content with ever so small a portion of it, as being upon the point of leaving even that little. It is *then* he recollects there are gods, and that he himself is but a man: * no mortal is then the

from the Pyrenean Mountains, which separate France from Spain, to the Alps, which divide it from Italy, and comprehended Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiny, and Savoy. *M.*

* The awakening power of adversity in general is so beautifully described by the banished duke in Shakespeare's As You Like It that it will not, perhaps, be impertinent to take the privilege of a commentator

object of his envy, his admiration, or his contempt; and the tales of slander neither raise his attention nor feed his curiosity: his dreams are only of baths and fountains.* These are the supreme objects of his cares and wishes, while he resolves, if he should recover, to pass the remainder of his days in ease and tranquillity, that is, to live innocently and happily. I may therefore lay down to you and myself a short rule, which the philosophers have endeavoured to inculcate at the expense of many words, and even many volumes; that 'we should try and realise in health those resolutions we form in sickness.' Farewell.

LETTER XXVII. *To* SURA.

The present recess from business we are now enjoying affords you leisure to give, and me to receive, instruction. I am extremely desirous therefore to know whether you believe in the existence of ghosts, and that they have a real form, and are a sort of divinities, or only the visionary impressions of a terrified imagination? What particularly inclines me to believe in their existence is a story † which I heard of Curtius Rufus. When he was in low circumstances and unknown in the world, he attended the governor of Africa into that province. One evening, as he was walking in the public portico, there appeared to him the figure of a woman, of unusual size and of beauty more than human. And as he stood there, terrified and astonished, she told him she was the tutelary power that presided over

and produce it as a parallel passage, especially as the thought in the second line is exactly the same with this of Pliny's before us:

'This is no flattery: These are counsellors
That *feelingly persuade me what I am.*
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.'
Act ii. sc. i. *M.*

* The ancient physicians advised bathing as of sovereign efficacy in various disorders. *M.*

† This story is likewise related by Tacitus in the 11th book of his Annals, chap. xxi. *M.*

Africa, and was come to inform him of the future events of his life: that he should go back to Rome, to enjoy high honours there, and return to that province invested with the proconsular dignity, and there should die. Every circumstance of this prediction actually came to pass. It is said farther that upon his arrival at Carthage, as he was coming out of the ship, the same figure met him upon the shore. It is certain, at least, that being seized with a fit of illness, though there were no symptoms in his case that led those about him to despair, he instantly gave up all hope of recovery; judging, apparently, of the truth of the future part of the prediction by what had already been fulfilled, and of the approaching misfortune from his former prosperity. Now the following story, which I am going to tell you just as I heard it, is it not more terrible than the former, while quite as wonderful? There was at Athens * a large and roomy house, which had a bad name, so that no one could live there. In the dead of the night a noise, resembling the clashing of iron was frequently heard, which, if you listened more attentively, sounded like the rattling of chains, distant at first, but approaching nearer by degrees: immediately afterwards a spectre appeared in the form of an old man, of extremely emaciated and squalid appearance, with a long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands. The distressed occupants meanwhile passed their wakeful nights under the most dreadful terrors imaginable. This, as it broke their rest, ruined their health, and brought on distempers, their terror grew upon them, and death ensued. Even in the day time, though the spirit did not appear, yet the impression remained so strong upon their imaginations that it still seemed before their eyes, and kept them in perpetual alarm. Consequently the house was at length deserted, as being deemed absolutely uninhabitable; so that it was now entirely abandoned to the ghost. However, in hopes that some tenant might be found who was ignorant of this very alarming circumstance, a bill was put up, giving notice that it was either to be let or sold.

* Lucian ridicules a story pretty much resembling this, but lays the scene of it in Corinth. *M.*

It happened that Athenodorus * the philosopher came to Athens at this time, and, reading the bill, enquired the price. The extraordinary cheapness raised his suspicion; nevertheless, when he heard the whole story, he was so far from being discouraged that he was more strongly inclined to hire it, and, in short, actually did so. When it grew towards evening, he ordered a couch to be prepared for him in the front part of the house, and, after calling for a light, together with his pencil and tablets, directed all his people to retire. But that his mind might not, for want of employment, be open to the vain terrors of imaginary noises and spirits, he applied himself to writing with the utmost attention. The first part of the night passed in entire silence, as usual; at length a clanking of iron and rattling of chains was heard: however, he neither lifted up his eyes nor laid down his pen, but in order to keep calm and collected tried to pass the sounds off to himself as something else. The noise increased and advanced nearer, till it seemed at the door, and at last in the chamber. He looked up, saw, and recognised the ghost exactly as it had been described to him: it stood before him, beckoning with the finger, like a person who calls another. Athenodorus in reply made a sign with his hand that it should wait a little, and threw his eyes again upon his papers; the ghost then rattled its chains over the head of the philosopher, who looked up upon this, and seeing it beckoning as before, immediately arose, and, light in hand, followed it. The ghost slowly stalked along, as if encumbered with its chains, and, turning into the area of the house, suddenly vanished. Athenodorus, being thus deserted, make a mark with some grass and leaves on the spot where the spirit left him. The next day he gave information to the magistrates, and advised them to order that spot to be dug up. This was accordingly done, and the skeleton of a man in chains was found there; for the body, having lain a considerable time in the ground, was putrefied and mouldered away from the fetters. The bones being collected together were publicly buried, and thus after the ghost was appeased by the proper cere-

* A Stoic philosopher and native of Tarsus. He was tutor for some time to Octavius, afterwards Augustus, Caesar.

monies, the house was haunted no more. This story I believe upon the credit of others; what I am going to mention, I give you upon my own. I have a freedman named Marcus, who is by no means illiterate. One night,* as he and his younger brother were lying together, he fancied he saw somebody upon his bed, who took out a pair of scissors, and cut off the hair from the top part of his own head, and in the morning, it appeared his hair was actually cut, and the clippings lay scattered about the floor. A short time after this, an event of a similar nature contributed to give credit to the former story. A young lad of my family was sleeping in his apartment with the rest of his companions, when two persons clad in white came in, as he says, through the windows, cut off his hair as he lay, and then returned the same way they entered. The next morning it was found that this boy had been served just as the other, and there was the hair again, spread about the room. Nothing remarkable indeed followed these events, unless perhaps that I escaped a prosecution, in which, if Domitian (during whose reign this happened) had lived some time longer, I should certainly have been involved. For after the death of that emperor, articles of impeachment against me were found in his *scrutore*, which had been exhibited by Carus. It may therefore be conjectured, since it is customary for persons under any public accusation to let their hair grow,† this cutting off the hair of my servants was a sign I should escape the imminent danger that threatened me. Let me

* Those who are unacquainted with the genius of the ancient Romans may be inclined to think meanly of our author's judgment, from this and the following story; but when it is remembered that the greatest characters which we meet with among that illustrious people are all strongly marked with a vein of superstition, no particular charge of weak credulity can with justice be brought from hence against Pliny. The truth is, it was a national turn, and countenanced by the constitution of their government, insomuch that omens, even of the lowest kind, were considered previous to every step either of foreign or domestic concern: and the wisest and gravest of their historians, Livy not excepted, have given evidence to accounts of this nature. Even a noble historian among our own countrymen has not scrupled to insert a relation of the same kind and credibility, in his history of the civil wars. *M.*

† 'Letting the hair grow long was a chief feature of the "squalor" which persons in affliction assumed.' (Church and Brodribb.)

desire you then to give this question your mature consideration. The subject deserves your examination; as, I trust, I am not myself altogether unworthy a participation in the abundance of your superior knowledge. And though you should, as usual, balance between two opinions, yet I hope you will lean more on one side than on the other, lest, whilst I consult you in order to have my doubt settled, you should dismiss me in the same suspense and indecision that occasioned you the present application. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII. *To* SEPTITIUS.

You tell me certain persons have blamed me in your company, as being upon all occasions too lavish in the praise I give my friends. I not only acknowledge the charge, but glory in it; for can there be a nobler error than an overflowing benevolence? But still, who are these, let me ask, that are better acquainted with my friends than I am myself? Yet grant there are any such, why will they deny me the satisfaction of so pleasing a mistake? For supposing my friends not to deserve the highest encomiums I give them, yet I am happy in believing they do. Let them recommend then this malignant zeal to those (and their number is not inconsiderable) who imagine they show their judgment when they indulge their censure upon their friends. As for myself, they will never be able to persuade me I can be guilty of an excess* in friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX. *To* MONTANUS.

It would raise your laughter first, and then your indignation, and perhaps, after having composed yourself a little, you would be inclined to laugh again, were you to read what you will scarcely give credit to without reading it

* Balzac very prettily observes: '*Il y a des rivières qui ne font jamais tant de bien que quand elles se débordent; de même, l'amitié n'a rien meilleur que l'excès.*' *M.*

for yourself. I lately observed in the Tiburtine road,* within the first mile-stone, a monument erected to the memory of Pallas,† with the following inscription: 'THE SENATE DECREED TO HIM, AS A REWARD FOR HIS FIDELITY AND AFFECTION TO HIS PATRONS, THE HONOUR OF THE PRAETORIAN ORNAMENTS,‡ TOGETHER WITH THE SUM OF FIFTEEN MILLION OF SESTERCES: § BUT HE WAS CONTENTED WITH ACCEPTING ONLY THE HONOUR.' I am not indeed apt to wonder at distinctions of this sort, which are oftener the gift of Fortune than of Judgment; but I could not help reflecting, when I read this inscription, how empty and ridiculous are those honours which are thus sometimes thrown away upon dirt and infamy; which such a rascal, in short, had the assurance both to accept and to refuse, and then actually publish to posterity as an example of his singular moderation! Yet why should I feel indignant? Let me rather treat it as a matter for laughter, that such creatures may not flatter themselves they have obtained anything very considerable, when their honours only expose them to a severer ridicule. Farewell.

LETTER XXX. *To* Genitor.

I am so grieved to hear in your letter that you have lost such a promising pupil. Need I be informed that his sickness and death must have interrupted your studies, knowing, as I do, with what scrupulous care you fulfil every duty, and how unbounded your affection is to all those whom you esteem? As for myself, town business pursues me even here, and I am not out of the reach of people who would make me either their judge or their arbitrator. To this I must add, not only the continual complaints of

* The road leading to Tivoli, in Campania. *M.*

† He was at first a slave in the court of Claudius Caesar, who afterwards gave him his freedom, and raised him to his chief favour. The patrons mentioned in this inscription are that emperor and his consort Agrippina, to whom Pallas had likewise recommended himself by some signal services. *M.*

‡ The senate, as a mark of honourable distinction, would sometimes decree the privilege of wearing ornaments peculiar to certain dignities, to persons who had not enjoyed the office to which those ornaments were annexed. *M.*

§ About £117,000.

the farmers, who claim a sort of prescriptive right to try my patience as they please; but the necessity too of letting out my farms: a very troublesome business, as it is so rare to meet with suitable tenants. For these reasons I can only study by snatches; still however I do study. I sometimes read, and sometimes compose; but my reading shows me, by comparison, what an inferior writer I am. Though really you give me great encouragement when you compare the piece I wrote in vindication of Helvidius to the oration of Demosthenes against Midias.* I confess I had that speech by me when I composed mine; not that I pretended to rival it (that would have been presumption, madness almost!), but I endeavoured at least to imitate it, as far as the difference of our subjects would admit, and as nearly as a genius of the lowest rank can copy one of the highest. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI. *To* Cornutus.

Claudius Pollio is extremely desirous of your friendship, and he deserves it not only for that reason, but because he offers you *his;* as indeed few ever request the one without being disposed to give the other. For the rest, he is an upright, honest, good-natured man, and modest, I had almost said, beyond measure; if indeed it is possible to be so. We served in the army together, where he commanded a troop of horse, and I had a better opportunity of studying his character than merely what his being my fellow-soldier gave me. I was appointed by the lieutenant-general to examine the accounts of the several companies, and as I discovered many instances of gross avarice and neglect of duty in those of some, so I found the highest integrity and most assiduous care in his. He afterwards rose to very considerable employments in the management of the revenue, yet no temptations could turn aside the innate bias of his soul from honesty, no prosperity puff him up, but he preserved, in all his various posts, his honour and his humanity unimpeached; while he supported the fatigues of business with the same firmness and strength of mind he now dis-

* Written 355 B.C., but never delivered. *M.*

plays in his retreat. He once indeed intermitted and laid aside his retirement for a short time, greatly to his credit, being called by my worthy friend Corellius to his assistance, in purchasing and dividing out those lands which were assigned the public by the liberality of the emperor Nerva.* And could there be anything more to his honour than to be thus specially singled out from so many others, by so eminent a man? You may judge how faithfully he reveres the sacred ties of friendship, by casting your eyes upon the last wills † of several of his friends, particularly that of Annus Bassus, one of our most considerable citizens. Pollio (cultivating, as he does, literature, as well as every other valuable endowment) has published, with the grateful object of perpetuating and extending the memory of Bassus, an account of his life; a circumstance too uncommon and too generous not to be applauded, since the generality of the world seldom mention the dead, unless to complain of them. Receive, then, this worthy man, greatly desirous (believe me) of your friendship, embrace him, nay even invite him to accept of it, give him your love, as though you owed it him; for he who makes the first friendly advances cannot so properly be said to solicit as to claim a return. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII. *To* Fabatus (*his wife's grandfather*).

I am extremely pleased that the arrival of my friend Tiro was agreeable to you. But above all I rejoice that you made use (as your letter informs me) of the opportunity which the presence of the proconsul afforded you, of manumitting ‡ several of your slaves. For I wish to see our country improved by every possible means, and particularly by an increase of citizens, as that, of all others, is the strongest ornament a community can receive. I am pleased too (not out of a spirit of vanity, however I am pleased

* Nerva restored to the Romans all that Domitian had plundered them of, and gave a very large sum of money to be laid out in the purchase of lands for the support of decayed families.

† See letter xx. of this book, note *.

‡ See letter xvi. of this book.

I confess) with what you add, that both you and I have been honoured, upon this occasion, with thanks and praise; for, as Xenophon observes, 'Praise is the sweetest strain the ear takes in'; especially when we think we deserve it. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII. *To* TACITUS.

I predict (and I am persuaded I shall not be deceived) that your histories will be immortal. I frankly own therefore * I so much the more earnestly wish to find a place in them. If we are generally careful to have our faces taken by the best artists, ought we not to desire that our actions may be celebrated by an author of your distinguished abilities? I therefore call your attention to the following matter, which, though it cannot have escaped your notice,

* As some ingenious writers have affected to draw a comparison between our author and Cicero, to the disadvantage of the former, it will not, it is hoped, be thought any want of reverence to a character which deserves the highest veneration from every admirer of the fine arts to set before the reader an instance where Pliny greatly outshines that noble example he was, upon all occasions, so desirous of copying. There is a letter of Cicero's extant, to the same purpose as this of Pliny's, addressed to his friend Lucceius,[1] who was writing the history of his own times. The agreeable Montaigne condemns them both as instances of immoderate ambition, and observes that 'fortune, as it were in pure spite, has taken care to hand down to us the vanity of these requests, while she has long since destroyed the histories they solicited.'[2] Let it be remarked, however, in justice to our author, that, upon a comparison of the two letters, the ambition of Pliny will appear far more reasonable than that of Cicero; for the latter does not scruple to press his friend to transgress the rules of history, and break through the bounds of truth in his favour: '*Te plane etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornas ea vehementius etiam quam fortasse sentis, et in ea leges historiae negligas, amorique nostro plusculum etiam quam concedit veritas largire:*' whereas Pliny, with a far nobler spirit, expressly declares he does not desire Tacitus should heighten the fact, and that actions of real worth need only to be set in their true light. In Cicero's letter we read the extravagant dictates of the most immoderate ambition; and he himself confesses he had not the assurance to look his friend in the face while he proposed them: '*Coram me tecum eadem haec agere saepe conantem deterruit pudor:*' in Pliny's we see nothing but what is agreeable to cool sense, and the honest ambition of one who was conscious he had acted well, and desirous posterity should know it. *M.*

[1] Ep. Fam. l. 5, 12. [2] Tom. i. 329.

as it is mentioned in the public journals,* still I call your attention to, that you may the more readily believe how agreeable it will be to me that this action, greatly heightened by the risk which attended it, should receive additional lustre from the testimony of a man of your powers. The senate appointed Herennius Senecio, and myself, counsel for the province of Baetica, in their impeachment of Boebius Massa. He was condemned, and the house ordered his effects to be seized into the hands of the public officer. Shortly after, Senecio, having learnt that the consuls intended to sit to hear petitions, came and said to me, 'Let us go together, and petition them with the same unanimity in which we executed the office which had been enjoined us, not to suffer Massa's effects to be dissipated by those who were appointed to preserve them.' I answered, 'As we were counsel in this affair by order of the senate, I recommend it to your consideration whether it would be proper for us, after sentence passed, to interpose any farther.' 'You are at liberty,' said he, 'to prescribe what bounds you please to yourself, who have no particular connections with the province, except what arise from your late services to them; but then I was born there, and enjoyed the post of quaestor among them.' 'If such,' I replied, 'is your determined resolution, I am ready

* Whether Pliny means by the *publica acta* the journal of the senate, or what Tacitus[1] and Suetonius[2] call the *diurna acta*, may admit of a doubt. The former seems to have been exactly in the nature of our votes of the House of Commons, wherein a short account was given to the public of what passed in the senate; the latter appears very much to resemble our *Gazette*, being an authorized narrative of the transactions worthy of notice which happened in Rome. Petronius has given us the form of the latter of these, in his account of Trimalchio; and as it may not, perhaps, be unentertaining to the English reader to see how exactly a Roman newspaper runs in the style of a modern one, the following is an article or two out of it.

'On the 26th of July, 30 boys and 40 girls were born at Trimalchio's estate at Cuma.'

'At the same time a slave was put to death for uttering disrespectful words against his lord.'

'The same day a fire broke out in Pompey's gardens, which began in the night, in the steward's apartment.' Petron. Satyr. p. 196, ed. Var. *M.*

[1] Annal. 30, 31. [2] In J Caesar. 20.

to accompany you, that whatever resentment may be the consequence of this affair, it may not fall singly upon yourself.' We accordingly proceeded to the consuls, where Senecio said what was pertinent to the affair, and I added a few words to the same effect. Scarcely had we ended when Massa, complaining that Senecio had not acted against him with the fidelity of an advocate, but the bitterness of an enemy, desired he might be at liberty to prosecute him for treason.* This occasioned general con-

* The reader will undoubtedly be surprised to find a prosecution of *treason*, founded merely upon a suggestion of misconduct in the management of a private trial. But this difficulty will be cleared, perhaps, by considering the character of Domitian, in whose reign this transaction happened. To show any dislike to those who were the favourites of that infamous emperor was construed by him into an act of treason against himself. He could gather that poisonous weed (as our author in his panegyric strongly expresses it) even from the barren sands of the theatre (*crimina majestatis in arena colligebat*); for not to admire his very gladiators was deemed, in those wretched times, an act of disloyalty. If therefore Massa was in the good graces of Domitian, it would have been very easy for the former to strain the honest zeal which Senecio had shown in conducting this cause into an instance of disrespect to the emperor. And the character which Tacitus gives of this Massa strongly supports that supposition, for he describes him as the bane of every good man, and an instrument of those calamities which the Romans suffered under Domitian; '*optimo cuique exitiosus*,' says he, '*et in causas malorum quae tulimus.*' (Tacit. Hist. l. 4, 50.) It must be owned, however, that the expression in the original (*postulatio impietatis*) does not so absolutely and necessarily imply a prosecution of treason, but that it may admit of another interpretation. Accordingly, a gentleman of distinguished learning, who favoured the translator with his sentiments upon this passage, has offered a conjecture much too ingenious to be suppressed. 'It was the practice' (he observes) 'of the ancients, that all deposits, trusts, sequestrations, wills, &c., should be lodged in the most secure and unsuspected places; accordingly, they chose their temples for that purpose, and the priests were of course the legal sequestrators:

'"*Nos ibi apud Theotimum omne aurum deposuimus,*
Qui illic sacerdos est in Dianae Ephesiae."[1]
'Plaut. Bacch.

And of this the classic and civil-law books furnish abundant proof. He

[1] TRANSLATION.

. . 'The gold, we with
Theotimus deposited, a priest
Of the Ephesian Dian.' (Thornton.)

sternation. Whereupon I rose up; 'Most noble consuls, said I, 'I am afraid it should seem that Massa has tacitly charged me with having favoured him in this cause, since he did not think proper to join me with Senecio in the desired prosecution.' This short speech was immediately received with applause, and afterwards got much talked about everywhere. The late emperor Nerva (who, though at that time in a private station, yet interested himself in every meritorious action performed in public) wrote a most impressive letter to me upon the occasion, in which he not only congratulated me, but the age which had produced an example so much in the spirit (as he was pleased to call it) of the good old days. But, whatever be the actual fact, it lies in your power to raise it into a grander and more conspicuously illustrious position, though I am far from desiring you in the least to exceed the bounds of reality. History ought to be guided by strict truth, and worthy actions require nothing more. Farewell.

thinks therefore that an insinuation that Massa had been tampering with the church to betray this *fidei commissum*, and that the security became suspicious, might *possibly* carry an action of *impiety*.' However, upon a closer examination of the letter, and comparing it with the history of that age, the interpretation adopted in the text may, perhaps, be justified. *M.*

BOOK VIII.

LETTER I. *To* Septitius.

I had a good journey here, excepting only that some of my servants were upset by the excessive heat. Poor Encolpius, my reader,* who is so indispensable to me in my studies and amusements, was so affected with the dust that it brought on a spitting of blood: an accident which will prove no less unpleasant to me than unfortunate to himself, should he be thereby rendered unfit for the literary work in which he so greatly excels. If that should unhappily result, where shall I find one who will read my works so well, or appreciate them so thoroughly as he? Whose tones will my ears drink in as they do his? But the gods seem to favour our better hopes, as the bleeding is stopped, and the pain abated. Besides, he is extremely temperate; while no concern is wanting on my part or care on his physician's. This, together with the wholesomeness of the air, and the quiet of retirement, gives us reason to expect that the country will contribute as much to the restoration of his health as to his rest. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Calvisius.

Other people visit their estates in order to recruit their purses; whilst I go to mine only to return so much the poorer. I had sold my vintage to the merchants, who were extremely eager to purchase it, encouraged by the price it then bore, and what it was probable it would rise to: however they were disappointed in their expectations. Upon this occasion to have made the same general abatement to all would have been much the easiest, though not so

* Persons of rank and literature among the Romans retained in their families a domestic whose sole business was to read to them. M.

equitable a method. Now I hold it particularly worthy of a man of honour to be governed by principles of strict equity in his domestic as well as public conduct; in little matters as in great ones; in his own concerns as well as in those of others. And if every deviation from rectitude is equally criminal,* every approach to it must be equally praiseworthy. So accordingly I remitted to all in general one-eighth part of the price they had agreed to give me, that none might go away without some compensation: next, I particularly considered those who had advanced the largest sums towards their purchase, and done me so much the more service, and been greater sufferers themselves. To those, therefore, whose purchase amounted to more than ten thousand sesterces,† I returned (over and above that which I may call the general and common eighth) a tenth part of what they had paid beyond that sum. I fear I do not express myself sufficiently clearly; I will endeavour to explain my meaning more fully: for instance, suppose a man had purchased of me to the value of fifteen thousand sesterces,‡ I remitted to him one-eighth part of that whole sum, and likewise one-tenth of five thousand.§ Besides this, as several had deposited, in different proportions, part of the price they had agreed to pay, whilst others had advanced nothing, I thought it would not be at all fair that all these should be favoured with the same undistinguished remission. To those, therefore, who had made any payments, I returned a tenth part upon the sums so paid. By this means I made a proper acknowledgment to each, according to their respective deserts, and likewise encouraged them, not only to deal with me for the future, but to be prompt in their payments. This instance of my good-nature or my judgment (call it which you please) was a considerable expense to me. However, I found my account in it; for all the country greatly approved both of the novelty of these abatements and the manner in which I regulated them. Even those whom I did not 'mete' (as they say) 'by the same measure,' but distinguished according to their several degrees, thought themselves obliged

* It was a doctrine maintained by the Stoics that all crimes are equal. *M.*

† About £80. ‡ About £120. § About £19.

to me, in proportion to the probity of their principles, and went away pleased with having experienced that not with me

'The brave and mean an equal honour find.'*

Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* SPARSUS.

You give me to understand that, of all my works, the last I sent you is your greatest favourite. The same judgment has likewise been passed upon it by another friend, a man of great learning: and I am the more inclined to believe that neither of you is mistaken, not only because it is improbable you should both be, but because I am very prone to flatter myself. I would, always, indeed, have my last performance appear the most finished; and for that reason prefer the speech I lately published to the one you mention. I will send it you as soon as I can find a safe messenger. And now I have raised your expectations to a degree which, I fear, this speech will disappoint when it comes into your hands. In the meanwhile, however, you may expect it as something that will please you: and who knows but it may? Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* CANINIUS.

I greatly approve your design of writing a poem upon the Dacian† war: for where else could you have chosen a subject so new, so full of events, so extensive, and so poetical? a subject which, while it has all the recommendation of truth, possesses all the marvellous of fiction? You will

* Hom. Il. lib. ix. v. 319.

† Dacia comprehended part of the present kingdom of Hungary, together with part of Transylvania, Servia, Wallachia, and Moldavia. It was first subdued and added to the Roman empire by Trajan, in memory of whose victories over this nation the famous pillar is supposed to have been erected, called Trajan's Pillar, which is still to be seen entire at Rome. It is 128 Italian feet high, to the top of which you ascend by 184 steps, which wind round the inside. The outside is covered in basso relievo, with the representation of the most remarkable circumstances of this expedition. (Bartoli, Colonna Traj.) After the

sing of rivers taught to flow in new channels; of bridges * thrown over immense rivers; of encampments upon the dreadful precipices of craggy mountains; and of a brave prince † superior to adversity, though forced to abandon his crown, and even his life. You will describe, too, the glorious victor's double triumph, one of which was the first that was ever gained over that hitherto unconquered nation, as the other will be the last. There is one difficulty, however, and a very considerable one it is, that is, where to find expressions adequate to the grandeur of the subject; a difficulty which seems almost insuperable even to your commanding genius, though capable of rising and dilating to the amplest demands of your subject. Some difficulty, too, you will find in adapting those barbarous and uncouth names, especially that of the king ‡ himself, to Greek measures. There is nothing, however, so hard that art and industry cannot, at least, mitigate, if not absolutely

death of Trajan, his ashes were placed, as some authors say, in a golden ball on the top of this noble pillar: but Eutropius affirms they were deposited under it. Eutrop. l. viii. c. 5. *M.*

* It is probable Pliny here alludes to the famous bridge built by Trajan over the river Danube, in the upper Moesia, that last flight, as Sir William Temple calls it, of ancient architecture. 'It is styled by the ancients the most stately fabric of that nature in the universe. It was all of square stone, and contained 20 arches, each of them 120 feet above the foundation, and 60 feet in breadth, all distinct from each other 170 feet. It was built where the river was narrowest, and consequently where the stream was strongest and most rapid; which renders the fabric still more stupendous, on account of the almost insurmountable difficulties they must have met with in laying so large a foundation. The architect employed upon this occasion was one Apollodorus of Damascus, who, it seems, left a description of this great work. We are told that some remains are still to be seen of it near Zeveria, in Lower Hungary.—Adrian, fearing that the barbarians might make use of it to invade the Roman territories, broke down the arches; but the piers were still standing in Dion Cassius's time, that is, 120 years after, though they served only to show, says the writer, the utmost extent of human power. This stupendous fabric was begun and ended in a summer.' Univ. Hist. v. vi. p. 14. *M.*

† Decĕbălus, king of the Dacians, who, rather than fall into the hands of the conqueror, or live in dependence, put an end to his own life. *M.*

‡ From hence Catanaeus conjectures, upon the credit of Orosius, that the true name of the king was *Diurpaneus*, which was afterwards changed by the Greek and Latin writers to Decebalus. *M.*

subdue. If Homer is allowed to contract or lengthen or change even Grecian names, which are naturally soft to the ear, in order to make them run more smoothly in his verse, why should the same licence be refused you, especially since it is necessity, and not affectation, that pleads for the indulgence? Come on then, my friend, and after having, as poets are wont, invoked the gods, and among the rest, that divine hero,* whose empire, deeds, and counsels you are going to celebrate, loosen all your cordage, spread every sail, and now, if ever, launch forth on the full tide of your genius: for you must allow me to be poetical when I am talking to a poet. And now I insist that you send me every part as soon as it has received your last finishing touches; and even before, while it is only a rough sketch, and yet in embryo. You will tell me that a detached piece cannot please, like one entire design, nor an unfinished plan be as agreeable as a complete work. I am very sensible it cannot, and therefore shall consider it only as in its first rudiments; as a separate and disjointed member; and shall lay it up in my *scrutore*, to await your final strokes. Indulge me then with this very singular instance of your affection, that you suffer me to be privy even to what you would choose to conceal from every one else. In a word, though the more time and caution you take in communicating your work to the public, the more, possibly, it may heighten my esteem and approbation of the poet, yet the sooner, and with the less scruple you send it to me, the more I shall love and applaud the friend. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* GEMINIUS.

Our friend Macrinus has received a most severe wound: he has lost his wife! a lady whose virtues would have assigned her a rank by herself even in former times. He lived with her thirty-nine years in the most uninterrupted harmony. How respectful was her behaviour towards him! and how deserving was she herself of the highest veneration, blending and uniting as she did in her own person all those

* Trajan.

amiable virtues that adorn and distinguish the different periods of female life! It should, surely, afford great consolation to Macrinus that he has enjoyed so exquisite a blessing for so long. But that reflection seems only so much the more to embitter his loss; as indeed the pain of parting with our happiness still rises in proportion to the length of its continuance. I cannot therefore but be greatly anxious for so dear a friend, till this deep wound to his peace shall be in a state to admit of proper applications. Time, however, together with a satiety of grief itself, will best, and indeed necessarily, effect his cure. Farewell

LETTER VI. To Montanus.

My last letter has by this time, I imagine, informed you that I observed lately upon a monument erected to the memory of Pallas the following inscription: '*The senate* decreed to him, as a reward for his fidelity and affection to his patrons, the honour of the praetorian ornaments, together with the sum of fifteen millions of sesterces: but he was content with accepting only the honour.*' I afterwards thought it worth while to search for the original record, and found it to run in so copious and effusive a strain that this proud inscription seems modest and humble to it. The eulogiums which have been given to the most illustrious Romans—I do not say those of more remote antiquity, as the Scipios and the Mummii, but (to come nearer our own times) the Marii, the Syllas, and the Pompeys, collectively—fall infinitely short of those which have been lavished upon Pallas. Was it a spirit of banter, may one suppose, or of slavery, that produced this decree? I would ascribe it to the former, were not raillery unbecoming the dignity of the senate. Must it be attributed then to the most abject subjection? Yet who could be sunk so low as to be capable of such meanness! Or was it perhaps prompted by ambition and lust of preferment? But whom can we suppose so mad as to desire to raise himself at the expense both of his own and the public honour, and that in a community where to be first in rank was to be first in flattering Pallas? Not to

* See book vii. letter xxix. and the notes there.

mention their offering to a slave the praetorian honours; they were slaves themselves who did this: to pass by that part of their decree, where they say that Pallas ought not only to be entreated, but compelled to wear the golden ring:* no doubt it was not consistent with the dignity of the senate, that a person of praetorian rank should wear an iron one; pass over, I say, these less flagrant instances, mark but the following clause: '*The senate*' (and it was not purified after so vile a pollution?) '*the senate returns thanks to Caesar,*† *not only for the honourable mention he himself was pleased to make of Pallas, but for the opportunity afforded the house as well of testifying their good-will towards him.*' It was highly to the credit, no doubt, of the senate, not to appear deficient in point of gratitude to Pallas! It goes on: '*That Pallas, to whom every man, according to his abilities, acknowledges his obligations, may receive the just reward of his singular fidelity, and no less singular services.*' Would one not imagine that he had extended the bounds of the empire, or, at least, preserved the armies of the state? But it proceeds: '*Since no occasion more agreeable could present itself to the senate and the Roman people, of exercising their liberality, than an opportunity of rewarding one who had proved himself so honest and disinterested a guardian of the emperor's finances.*'—Such was the glorious ambition of the senate at that time; such the highest pleasure of the people; such the most agreeable occasion of exercising their liberality, to have an opportunity of exhausting the public funds upon Pallas! It follows: '*The senate therefore voted that fifteen millions of sesterces should be paid him out of the treasury, and, as he has a soul far superior to desires of this kind, that the emperor should be so much the more strongly entreated to use his authority with Pallas, to oblige him to comply with the inclination of the senate.*' Nothing more indeed seemed wanting to complete this extraordinary scene than that the imperial authority should interpose; that Pallas should be pressed to yield to the senate; that Caesar himself should be called in to oppose this insolent piece of self denial, lest the humble Pallas should refuse fifteen millions of sesterces! He refused,

* None but knights and senators had the privilege of wearing a gold ring; as an iron one was a badge of servitude. *M.*

† Claudius.

nevertheless, the offer the public made him of this immense sum; the only thing he could possibly have done more arrogant than the accepting of it. Yet even this the senate applauded, and seems to lament in the following clause: '*But whereas our excellent prince and father of his country has, at the instance of Pallas, expressed his desire to have that part of the vote remitted which relates to the giving him fifteen millions of sesterces out of the treasury, the senate declares that it was with much willingness and great justness they voted, amongst other honours, the said intended sum to Pallas, upon account of his fidelity and vigilance: however, in compliance with the emperor's inclination, which they think cannot without impiety be opposed in any instance, they obey it even in the present.*' Picture to yourself Pallas entering his protest, as it were, against the decree of the senate; moderating the honours which were offered him, and refusing, as something much more valuable, the fifteen millions, when at the same time he accepted the praetorian ornaments, as a present of an inferior nature. Picture to yourself Caesar yielding to the entreaties of his freedman in the face of the senate, or rather, indeed, obeying his commands; for in such a case to *entreat* was to *command!* Imagine the senate declaring in every clause of this decree that it was with great willingness and justice the house intended, among other honours, to present Pallas with this sum: and that it would have insisted upon his acceptance of it but for the duty of compliance with the will of the emperor, which it was impious in any point to oppose! So that in order to hinder Pallas from carrying off fifteen millions out of the treasury, his own modesty was as necessary as the obsequiousness of the senate, who in this instance, of all others, would have made an exception to their obedience, if they had thought it right to have done so in any? And now, you imagine, you have got to the end of the business. Have patience, however, there is better still to come: '*And whereas it is highly expedient that the generous disposition of the emperor to approve and reward merit should be everywhere made known and celebrated, especially in such places where those entrusted with the care and administration of his affairs may be excited to an imitation; and whereas the approved fidelity and integrity of Pallas may stimulate others to noble emulation of such an ex-*

ample—It is therefore resolved that the memorial which the emperor read to the senate on the 28th of January last, together with the decree of the senate thereupon, shall be engraven in tablets of brass, and hung up near the martial statue of Julius Caesar.' * It was not, it seems, sufficient that the senate alone should be witness to this complicated disgrace; but the most frequented place in all Rome was chosen in order to display it to the then present and future times: it was decreed that all the honours of a most insolent slave, both those which he refused and those which (as much as in the authors of the decree lay) he had borne, should be inscribed in brass: the praetorian honours decreed to Pallas were inscribed, like ancient treaties or sacred laws, upon public and everlasting monuments of brass! Such was the —I know not what I should call it—of the emperor, the senate, and Pallas himself! It was just as though they were severally desirous that Pallas should testify his insolence, Caesar his patient endurance, the senate its servility, before the world. The senate was not ashamed to urge a reason for this baseness, and a truly excellent, noble one it was too, viz.: '*that others might be encouraged by the rewards conferred upon Pallas to an emulation of his conduct!*' Thus contemptible were all honours rendered, even those which the *noble* Pallas did not disdain to accept! And yet there were found persons of birth and condition who were so humble as to desire and solicit those very honours which they thus saw conferred upon a freedman, and offered to slaves. Happy for me that I was not born in those times, which I cannot help blushing for, as if I had actually lived in them! and, I am sure, you must feel as I do. I know the honest warmth of your temper, and am persuaded, although perhaps in some places I have given stronger vent to my indignation than is quite suitable to a letter, you will rather think I have complained too little than too much. Farewell.

LETTER VII. *To* TACITUS.

When you sent me your treatise, it was not (although you write in that strain) as one master, or disciple, would

* In the forum.

communicate his works to another, but with the condescension of a master to his disciple; for you are the master, I the disciple. Accordingly you summon me to my studies, whilst I am playing the truant and prolonging the Saturnalian holidays.*—Tell me now, could I have made a longer parenthesis, or given a clearer proof that, so far from deserving to be your master, I am not even worthy of being your disciple? However, I will take upon myself the character you have invested me with, and exert the authority you have given me over your book. And with so much the more freedom as I do not intend to send you anything of my own meanwhile upon which you may take your revenge. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Romanus.

Have you ever seen the source of the river Clitumnus?† If you have not (and I hardly think you can have seen it yet, or you would have told me), go there as soon as possible. I saw it yesterday, and I blame myself for not having seen it sooner. At the foot of a little hill, well wooded with old cypress trees, a spring gushes out, which, breaking up into different and unequal streams, forms itself, after several windings, into a large, broad basin of water, so transparently clear that you may count the shining pebbles, and the little pieces of money thrown into it,‡ as

* See page 66, note †.

† Now called Clitumno: it rises a little below the village of Campello in Ombria. The inhabitants near this river still retain a notion that its waters are attended with a supernatural property, imagining it makes the cattle white that drink of it: a quality for which it is likewise celebrated by many of the Latin poets.[1] *M.*

‡ The heads of considerable rivers, hot springs, large bodies of standing water, &c., were esteemed holy among the Romans, and cultivated with religious ceremonies. '*Magnorum fluminum*' (says Seneca) '*capita reveremur; subita et ex abdito vasti amnis eruptio aras habet; coluntur*

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[1] '*Qua formosa suo Clitumnus flumina luco*
Integit, et niveos abluit unda boves.'

Propertius ii. 19, 25.

TRANSLATION.

'Nigh where Clitumnus winds his waters fair
Through arching trees, and laves the snow-white herd.' *M.*

they lie at the bottom. From thence it is carried off not so much by the declivity of the ground as by its own weight and exuberance. A mere stream at its source, immediately, on quitting this, you find it expanded into a broad river, fit for large vessels even, allowing a free passage by each other, according as they sail with or against the stream. The current runs so strong, though the ground is level, that the large barges going down the river have no occasion to make use of their oars; while those going up find it difficult to make headway even with the assistance of oars and poles: and this alternate interchange of ease and toil, according as you turn, is exceedingly amusing when one sails up and down merely for pleasure. The banks are well covered with ash and poplar, the shape and colour of the trees being as clearly and distinctly reflected in the stream as if they were actually sunk in it. The water is cold as snow, and as white too. Near it stands an ancient and venerable temple, in which is placed the river-god Clitumnus clothed in the usual robe of state; and indeed the prophetic oracles here delivered sufficiently testify the immediate presence of that divinity. Several little chapels are scattered round, dedicated to particular gods, distinguished each by his own peculiar name and form of worship, and some of them, too, presiding over different fountains. For, besides the principal spring, which is, as it were, the parent of all the rest, there are several other lesser streams, which, taking their rise from various sources, lose themselves in the river; over which a bridge is built that separates the sacred part from that which lies open to common use. Vessels are allowed to come above this bridge, but no person is permitted to swim except below it.* The Hispellates,† to

aquarum calentium fontes, et stagna quaedam, vel opacitas, vel immensa altitudo sacravit.' Ep. 41. It was customary to throw little pieces of money into those fountains, lakes, &c. which had the reputation of being sacred, as a mark of veneration for those places, and to render the presiding deities propitious. Suetonius mentions this practice, in the annual vows which he says the Roman people made for the health of Augustus. Suet. in Vit. Aug. *M.*

* The touch of a naked body was thought to pollute these consecrated waters, as appears from a passage in Tacitus, l. 14. Ann. c. 22. *M.*

† Inhabitants of a town in Ombria, now called Spello. *M.*

whom Augustus gave this place, furnish a public bath, and likewise entertain all strangers, at their own expense. Several villas, attracted by the beauty of this river, stand about on its borders. In short, every surrounding object will afford you entertainment. You may also amuse yourself with numberless inscriptions upon the pillars and walls, by different persons, celebrating the virtues of the fountain, and the divinity that presides over it. Many of them you will admire, while some will make you laugh; but I must correct myself when I say so; you are too humane, I know, to laugh upon such an occasion,. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Ursus.

It is long since I have taken either book or pen in my hand. It is long since I have known the sweets of leisure and repose; since I have known, in short, that indolent but agreeable condition of doing nothing, and being nothing: so much have the affairs of my friends engaged me, and prevented me from enjoying the pleasures of retirement and literature. There is no sort of philosophical studies, however, sufficiently important to supersede the offices of friendship; for they are offices which philosophy herself teaches us most religiously to discharge. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Fabatus (*his wife's grandfather*).

Your concern to hear of your grand-daughter's miscarriage will be equal, I know, to the earnest desire you have that we should make you a great-grandfather. The inexperience of her youth rendered her ignorant of her condition; the consequence was that she omitted the necessary precautions to be observed in such cases, and did several things she ought not to have done. But she has severely atoned for her mistake by the extreme risk she has run of her life. So, although you must necessarily feel it rather to find yourself disappointed in this way in your old age, of the immediate hopes of leaving a family behind you, yet you ought to thank the gods that, in the preservation

of your grand-daughter, you have still reason to expect that blessing: an expectation so much the more certain as she has given this proof, though the issue in this case was unsuccessful, of her being capable of bearing children. These, at least, are the reflections by which I endeavour to reassure my own hopes, and comfort myself under my present disappointment. You cannot long to have great-grandchildren more intensely than I do to have children, as the dignity of both our families seems to open to them a sure road to honours, and we shall leave them the glory of descending from a long line of ancestors whose fame is as extensive as their nobility is ancient. Only let them be born, and change this present grief of ours into joy! Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* HISPULLA.*

When I consider that you love your niece even more tenderly than if she were your own daughter, I ought to begin by informing you of what in the natural order of events you should know last; so that the feeling of joy coming first may leave no room for anxiety on another account. Though I fear indeed, after your first impressions of joy have passed off, you will feel some anxiety, and, in the midst of your rejoicing over the danger she has escaped, will tremble at the thought of the risk she has run. She is now, however, in good spirits, and again restored to herself and to me, and recovering her strength and health as fast as she lost them. To say the truth (and I may now safely tell it you), she was in the utmost danger of her life; not indeed from any fault of her own, but a little from the inexperience of her youth. To this must be ascribed her miscarriage, and the sad experience she has had of the consequence of not knowing her condition. But though this misfortune has deprived you of the consolation of a nephew, or niece, to supply the loss of your brother, you must remember that blessing seems rather to be deferred than denied, since *her* life is preserved from whom that happiness is to be expected. I entreat you then to repre-

* His wife's aunt.

sent this accident to your father* in the most favourable light; as your sex are the most indulgent advocates in cases of this kind. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Minutianus.

I beg you to excuse me this one day: Titinius Capito is to recite a performance of his, and I know not whether it is more a matter of duty or of inclination with me to go to listen to him. He is a most excellent fellow, and justly to be numbered among the brightest ornaments of our age: he studiously cultivates literature himself, is a lover of literary men, he encourages them, he brings them forward, and to many of them he is the protector, the refuge, and the liberal patron; while a noble example to all of them. In a word, he is the restorer and reformer of literature, now, alas! in its declining years. His house is open to every man of genius who has any works to rehearse; and it is not there alone that he attends these assemblies with the most obliging good-nature. I am sure at least he never once excused himself from mine if he happened to be at Rome. I should therefore with a more than ordinary ill-grace refuse to return him the same favour, especially upon so honourable an occasion. Should not I think myself obliged to a man who, if I were engaged in any law-suit, generously undertook to stand bail for me? And am I less indebted, now that my whole care and business is of the literary kind, for his assiduity in my concerns of this sort; which, if not the only, is however the principal instance in which I can be obliged? But though I owed him no return of this nature; though I were not engaged to him by the reciprocal tie of the same services he has done me; yet not only the beauty and power of his genius, as exquisite as it is severely correct, but the dignity of his subject, would strongly incite me to go and hear him. He has written an account of the deaths of several eminent men, some of whom were my particular friends. It is a pious office then, it should seem, as I could not be present at their obsequies, to attend, at least, this (as I may call

* Fabatus, grandfather to Calpurnia, Pliny's wife. *M.*

it) their funeral oration; which, though a late, is however, for that reason, a more genuine tribute to their memories. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* GENIALIS.

I much approve of your having read my speeches with your father. It is decidedly to your advantage to learn from a man of his eloquence what to admire in compositions of this kind, and what to condemn; as you will at the same time be trained up in a habit of speaking your true opinion. You see whose steps it is you ought to follow; and happy are you in having a living example before you, which is at once the nearest and the noblest model you can pursue! In a word, that he whom nature designed you should most resemble is, of all others, the person whom you should most endeavour to imitate. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* ARISTO.

As you are no less acquainted with the political laws of your country (which include the customs and usages of the senate) than with the civil, I am particularly desirous to have your opinion whether I was mistaken in an affair which lately came before the house, or no. This I request, not with a view of being directed in my judgment as to what is passed (for that is now too late), but in order to know how to act in any possible future case of the kind. You will, ask, perhaps, 'Why do you apply for information concerning a point on which you ought to be well instructed?' Because the tyranny of former reigns,* as it introduced a neglect and ignorance of all other parts of useful knowledge, so particularly of what relates to the customs of the senate; for who is there so tamely industrious as to desire to learn what he can never have an opportunity of putting in practice? Besides, it is not very easy to retain even the knowledge one has acquired where no opportunity of employing it occurs. Hence it was that

* Those of Nero and Domitian. *M.*

Liberty, on her return,* found us totally ignorant and inexperienced; and thus in the warmth of our eagerness to taste her sweets, we are sometimes hurried on to action, ere we are well instructed how we ought to act. But by the institution of our ancestors, it was wisely provided that the young should learn from the old, not only by precept, but by their own observation, how to behave in that sphere in which they were one day themselves to move; while these, again, in their turn, transmitted the same mode of instruction to their children. Upon this principle it was that the youth were sent early into the army, that by being taught to obey they might learn to command, and, whilst they followed others, might be trained by degrees to become leaders themselves. On the same principle, when they were candidates for any office, they were obliged to stand at the door of the senate-house, and were spectators of the public council before they became members of it. The father of each youth was his instructor upon these occasions, or if he had none, some person of years and dignity supplied the place of a father. Thus they were taught by that surest method of discipline, Example, how far the right of proposing any law to the senate extended; what privileges a senator had in delivering his opinion in the house; the power of the magistrates in that assembly, and the rights of the rest of the members; where it is proper to yield, and where to insist; when and how long to speak, and when to be silent; how to make necessary distinctions between contrary opinions,† and how to improve upon a former motion: in a word, they learnt by this means every senatorial usage. As for myself, it is true indeed, I served in the army when I was a youth; but it was at a time when courage was suspected, and want of spirit rewarded; when generals were without authority, and soldiers without modesty; when there was

* When Nerva and Trajan received the empire. *M.*

† If any opinion proposed to the senate was thought too general, and to include several distinct articles, some of which might be approved, and others rejected, it was usual to require that it might be divided; and this they sometimes did by a general voice of the assembly, crying out, *Divide, divide.* Middlet. Treat. on the Roman Senate 137. *M.*

neither discipline nor obedience, but all was riot, disorder, and confusion; in short, when it was happier to forget than to remember what one learnt. I attended likewise in my youth the senate, but a senate shrinking and speechless; where it was dangerous to utter one's opinion, and mean and pitiable to be silent. What pleasure was there in learning, or indeed what could be learnt, when the senate was convened either to do nothing whatever or to give their sanction to some consummate infamy! when they were assembled either for cruel or ridiculous purposes,* and when their deliberations were never serious, though often sad! But I was not only a witness to this scene of wretchedness, as a spectator; I bore my share of it too as a senator, and both saw and suffered under it for many years; which so broke and damped my spirits that they have not even yet been able fully to recover themselves. It is within quite recently (for all time seems short in proportion to its happiness) that we could take any pleasure in knowing what relates to or in setting about the duties of our station. Upon these considerations, therefore, I may the more reasonably entreat you, in the first place, to pardon my error (if I have been guilty of one), and, in the next, to lead me out of it by your superior knowledge: for you have always been diligent to examine into the constitution of your country, both with respect to its public and private, its ancient and modern, its general and special laws. I am persuaded indeed the point upon

* The fourth Satire of Juvenal will serve as a comment upon this passage, where he acquaints us that a turbot of a most enormous size being brought to Domitian, he immediately convened the senate, in order to consult in what manner it should be dressed. The poet mentions the names of the persons who spoke in this remarkable debate, and their several opinions upon a question so important, concluding his satire with this pathetic wish:

> '*Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset*
> *Tempora saevitiae, claras quibus abstulit urbi*
> *Illustresque animas impune!*' . . . .
>
> Sat. 4.

TRANSLATION.

> 'Ah! as this day, that he had spent the rest,
> And his dire reign had only been a jest!
> Nor Rome her noblest blood had tamely seen
> Flow unreveng'd!' . . . . *M.*

which I am going to consult you is such an unusual one that even those whose great experience in public business must have made them, one would have naturally supposed, acquainted with everything were either doubtful or absolutely ignorant upon it. I shall be more excusable, therefore, if I happen to have been mistaken; as you will earn the higher praise if you can set me right in an affair which it is not clear has ever yet fallen within your observation. The enquiry then before the house was concerning the freedmen of Afranius Dexter, who being found murdered, it was uncertain whether he fell by his own hands, or by those of his household; and if the latter, whether they committed the fact in obedience* to the commands of Afranius, or were prompted to it by their own villainy. After they had been put to the question, a certain senator (it is of no importance to mention his name, but if you are desirous to know, it was myself) was for acquitting them; another proposed that they should be banished for a limited time; and a third that they should suffer death. These several opinions were so extremely different that it was impossible either of them could stand with the other. For what have death and banishment in common with one another? Why, no more than banishment and acquittal have together. Though an acquittal approaches rather nearer a sentence of exile than a sentence of death does: for both the former agree at least in this, that they spare life, whereas the latter takes it away. In the meanwhile, those senators who were for punishing with death, and those who proposed banishment, sate together on the same side of the house: and thus by a present appearance of unanimity suspended their real disagreement. I moved, therefore, that the votes for each of the three opinions should be separately taken, and that two of them should not, under favour of a short truce between themselves, join against the third. I insisted that such of the members who were for capital punishment should divide from the others who voted for

* Those who destroyed themselves frequently made use of the hands of their servants for that purpose. Thus Brutus and Cassius, after the loss of that fatal battle which decided the liberties of Rome, ran each of them upon the swords of their attendants. Florus, l. 4, c. 7. *M.*

banishment; and that these two distinct parties should not be permitted to form themselves into a body, in opposition to those who declared for acquittal, when they would immediately after disunite again: for it was not material that they agreed in disliking one proposal, since they differed with respect to the other two. It seemed very extraordinary that he who moved the freedmen should be banished, and the slaves suffer death, should not be allowed to join these two in one motion, but that each question should be ordered to be put to the house separately; and yet that the votes of one who was for inflicting capital punishment upon the freedmen should be taken together with that of one who was for banishing them. For if, in the former instance, it was reasonable that the motion should be divided, because it comprehended two distinct propositions, I could not see why, in the latter case, suffrages so extremely different should be thrown into the same scale. Permit me, then, notwithstanding the point is already settled, to go over it again as if it were still undecided, and to lay before you those reasons at my ease, which I offered to the house in the midst of much interruption and clamour. Let us suppose there had been only three judges appointed to hear this cause, one of whom was of opinion that the parties in question deserved death; the other that they should only be banished; and the third that they ought to be acquitted: should the two former unite their weight to overpower the latter, or should each be separately balanced? For the first and second are no more compatible than the second and third. They ought therefore in the same manner to be counted in the senate as contrary opinions since they were delivered as different ones. Suppose the same person had moved that they should both have been banished and put to death, could they possibly, in pursuance of this opinion, have suffered both punishments? Or could it have been looked upon as one consistent motion when it united two such different decisions? Why then should the same opinion, when delivered by distinct persons, be considered as one and entire, which would not be deemed so if it were proposed by a single man? Does not the law manifestly imply that a distinction is to be made between

those who are for a capital conviction, and those who are for banishment, in the very form of words made use of when the house is ordered to divide? *You who are of such an opinion, come to this side; you who are of any other, go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow.* Let us examine this form, and weigh every sentence: *You who are of this opinion:* that is, for instance, you who are for banishment, *come on this side;* namely, on the side of him who moved for banishment. From whence it is clear he cannot remain on the side of those who are for death. *You who are for any other:* observe, the law is not content with barely saying another, but it adds *any.* Now can there be a doubt as to whether they who declare for a capital conviction are of *any* other opinion than those who propose exile? *Go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow:* does not the law seem, as it were, to call, compel, drive, over, those who are of different opinions, to contrary sides? Does not the consul himself point out, not only by this solemn form of words, but by his hand and gesture, the place in which every man is to remain, or to which he is to go over? 'But,' it is objected, 'if this separation is made between those who vote for inflicting death, and those who are on the side of exile, the opinion for acquitting the prisoners must necessarily prevail.' But how does that affect the parties who vote? Certainly it does not become them to contend by every art, and urge every expedient, that the milder sentence may not take place. 'Still,' say they, 'those who are for condemning the accused either capitally or to banishment should be first set in opposition to those who are for acquitting them, and afterwards weighed against each other.' Thus, as, in certain public games, some particular combatant is set apart by lot and kept to engage with the conqueror; so, it seems, in the senate there is a first and second combat, and of two different opinions, the prevailing one has still a third to contend with. What? when any particular opinion is received, do not all the rest fall of course? Is it reasonable, then, that one should be thrown into the scale merely to weigh down another? To express my meaning more plainly: unless the two parties who are respectively for capital punishment and exile immediately separate upon the first division of the house it

would be to no purpose afterwards to dissent from those with whom they joined before. But I am dictating instead of receiving instruction.—Tell me then whether you think these votes should have been taken separately? My motion, it is true, prevailed; nevertheless I am desirous to know whether you think I ought to have insisted upon this point, or have yielded as that member did who declared for capital punishment? For convinced, I will not say of the legality, but at least of the equity of my proposal, he receded from his own opinion, and went over to the party for exile: fearing perhaps, if the votes were taken separately (which he saw would be the case), the freedmen would be acquitted: for the numbers were far greater on that side than on either of the other two, separately counted. The consequence was that those who had been influenced by his authority, when they saw themselves forsaken by his going over to the other party, gave up a motion which they found abandoned by the first proposer, and deserted, as it were, with their leader. Thus the three opinions were resolved at length into two; and of those two, one prevailed, and the other was rejected; while the third, as it was not powerful enough to conquer both the others, had only to choose to which of the two it would yield. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* JUNIOR.

I fear I have over-loaded you by sending so many volumes at once; but, if I have, remember it was your own request. Besides, as you wrote me word your vintage was so small, I plainly saw you would have leisure, in vulgar phrase, to read a book. I have had the same sort of news from my own little estate, and am myself therefore at leisure to write books for you, provided I can but raise money enough to furnish me with good parchment. For should I be reduced to the coarse and spongy sort, either I must not write at all or whatever I compose, whether good or bad, must necessarily undergo one general blot! Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* Paternus.

The sickness lately in my family, which has carried off several of my servants, some of them, too, in the prime of their years, has been a great affliction to me. I have two consolations, however, which, though by no means equivalent to such a grief, still are consolations. One is, that as I have always very readily manumitted my slaves, their death does not seem altogether immature, if they lived long enough to receive their freedom: the other, that I have allowed them to make a kind of will,* which I observe as religiously as if they were legally entitled to that privilege. I receive and obey their last requests and injunctions as so many authoritative commands, suffering them to dispose of their effects to whom they please; with this single restriction, that they leave them to some one in my household, for to slaves the house they are in is a kind of state and commonwealth, so to speak. But though I endeavour to acquiesce under these reflections, yet the same tenderness which led me to show them these indulgences weakens and gets the better of me. However, I would not wish on that account to become harder: though the generality of the world, I know, look upon losses of this kind in no other view than as a diminution of their property, and fancy, by cherishing such an unfeeling temper, they show a superior fortitude and philosophy. Their fortitude and philosophy I will not dispute. But humane, I am sure, they are not; for it is the very criterion of true manhood to *feel* those impressions of sorrow which it endeavours to resist, and to admit not to be above the want of consolation. But perhaps I have detained you too long upon this subject, though not so long as I would. There is a certain pleasure even in giving vent to one's grief; especially when we weep on the bosom of a friend who will approve, or, at least, pardon, our tears.† Farewell.

* A slave could acquire no property, and consequently was incapable by law of making a will. *M.*

† There is something so uncommonly amiable in this family piece that the reader cannot be displeased with being stopped a moment to

LETTER XVII. *To* MACRINUS.

Is the weather with you as rude and boisterous as it is with us? All here is tempest and inundation. The Tiber has swelled its channel, and overflowed its banks far and wide. Though the wise precaution of the emperor had guarded against this evil, by cutting several outlets to the river, it has nevertheless flooded all the fields and valleys, and entirely overspread the whole face of the flat country. It seems to have gone out to meet those rivers which it used to receive and carry off in one united stream, and has driven them back to deluge those countries it could not reach itself. That most delightful of rivers, the

take a second view of it. If nothing remained of Pliny but this single trait of his character, we might nevertheless assuredly pronounce of him, that he was ennobled by every social virtue: for as it is certain the greatest minds have ever been most open to impressions of the humane kind, so every moral virtue necessarily flows from benevolence, as from its true and genuine source. It is impossible a man who has a just feeling of the calamities of others can deliberately break through the moral ties of any kind; because it is certain he cannot do so without being the occasion of suffering to those who stand within the influence of the particular action. This principle also will ever afford the most unerring test of patriotism, or the public affections; for the cruel and unrelenting in private and domestic life can never act upon the true notion of liberty in the more enlarged relations of public concerns. With great justice, therefore, our author makes this generous principle the evidence of real manhood; as Juvenal describes a tenderness of disposition to be the principal note of distinction, which nature has marked out between the rational and brute creation:

. . . . '*Mollissima corda*
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quae lacrymas dedit. Haec nostri pars optima sensus.'
. . . . '*Quis enim bonus,—*
Ulla alieni sibi credat mala? separat hoc
Nos a grege mutorum' . . . .
Juv. Satir. 15, 131.

TRANSLATION.

'Heaven gave the tear humane, a sign confest,
Soft pity dwells within the mortal breast;
That noblest passion noblest bosoms know!—
Turn'd ever virtue from another's woe?
'Tis man's great privilege, the glorious line
That marks from brute the human soul divine.' *M.*

Anio,* which seems invited and detained in its course by the villas built along its banks, has almost entirely rooted up and carried away the woods which shaded its borders. It has overthrown whole mountains, and, in endeavouring to find a passage through the mass of ruins that obstructed its way, has forced down houses, and risen and spread over the desolation it has occasioned. The inhabitants of the hill countries, who are situated above the reach of this inundation, have been the melancholy spectators of its dreadful effects, having seen costly furniture, instruments of husbandry, ploughs, and oxen with their drivers, whole herds of cattle, together with the trunks of trees, and beams of the neighbouring villas, floating about in different parts. Nor indeed have these higher places themselves, to which the waters could not reach up, escaped the calamity. A continued heavy rain and tempestuous hurricane, as destructive as the river itself, poured down upon them, and has destroyed all the enclosures which divided that fertile country. It has damaged likewise, and even overturned, some of the public buildings, by the fall of which great numbers have been maimed, smothered, bruised. And thus lamentation over the fate of friends has been added to losses. I am extremely uneasy lest this extensive ruin should have spread to you: I beg therefore, if it has not, you will immediately relieve my anxiety; and indeed I desire you would inform me though it should have done so; for the difference is not great between fearing a danger, and feeling it; except that the evil one feels has some bounds, whereas one's apprehensions have none. For

* Now called the Teverone, which falls into the Tiber about three miles from Rome. Balzac, speaking of a little river, has a thought which is celebrated by Bohours:[1] '*Cette belle eau*' (says he) '*aime tellement ce pais, qu'elle se divise en mille branches, et fait une infinité d iles et de tours, afin de s'y amuser davantage.*' But he is indebted to Pliny for all the merit of it, as it is plainly a copy from this passage: an observation by no means intended as a reflection upon the French writer, who has too many original beauties of his own to suffer from a discovery of those which are not: it is designed only to show that the most celebrated author in the epistolary way among the moderns found advantage in conversing with Pliny. *M.*

[1] Dial. sur la Man. de bien Pens. p. 137.

we can suffer no more than what actually *has* happened, but we fear all that possibly *could* happen. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* RUFINUS.

The common notion is certainly quite a false one, that a man's will is a kind of mirror in which we may clearly discern his real character, for Domitius Tullus appears a much better man since his death than he did during his lifetime. After having artfully encouraged the expectations of those who paid court to him, with a view to being his heirs, he has left his estate to his niece whom he adopted. He has given likewise several very considerable legacies among his grandchildren, and also to his great-grandson. In a word, he has shown himself a most kind relation throughout his whole will; which is so much the more to be admired as it was not expected of him. This affair has been very much talked about, and various opinions expressed: some call him false, ungrateful, and forgetful, and, while thus railing at him in this way as if they were actually disinherited kindred, betray their own dishonest designs: others, on the contrary, applaud him extremely for having disappointed the hopes of this infamous tribe of men,* whom, considering the disposition of the times, it is but prudence to deceive. They add that he was not at liberty to make any other will, and that he cannot so properly be said to have bequeathed, as returned, his estate to his adopted daughter, since it was by her means it came to him. For Curtilius Mancia, whose daughter Domitius Lucanus, brother to this Tullus, married, having taken a dislike to his son-in-law, made this young lady (who was the issue of that marriage) his heiress, upon condition that Lucanus her father would emancipate her.† He accordingly

* See p. 129, note *.

† That is, would make her free; for (as has been observed in the notes above) the power of a father over his children was unlimited amongst the Romans. It extended not only to their fortunes, but their lives, and was even greater than what the laws allowed over their slaves; for if a master sold his slave, who afterwards obtained his freedom, the former owner had no further claim; whereas, in the case of a son, the father's right was not absolutely extinguished by selling

did so, but she being afterwards adopted by Tullus, her uncle, the design of Mancia's will was entirely frustrated. For these two brothers having never divided their patrimony, but living together as joint-tenants of one common estate, the daughter of Lucanus, notwithstanding the act of emancipation, returned back again, together with her large fortune, under the dominion of her father, by means of this fraudulent adoption. It seems indeed to have been the fate of these two brothers to be enriched by those who had the greatest aversion to them. For Domitius Afer, by whom they were adopted, left a will in their favour, which he had made eighteen years before his death; though it was plain he had since altered his opinion with regard to the family, because he was instrumental in procuring the confiscation of their father's estate. There is something extremely singular in the resentment of Afer, and the good fortune of the other two; as it was very extraordinary, on the one hand, that Domitius should endeavour to extirpate from the privileges of society a man whose children he had adopted, and, on the other, that these brothers should find a parent in the very person that ruined their father. But Tullus acted justly, after having been appointed sole heir by his brother, in prejudice to his own daughter, to make her amends by transferring to her this estate, which came to him from Afer, as well as all the rest which he had gained in partnership with his brother. His will therefore deserves the higher praise, having been dictated by nature, justice, and sense of honour; in which he has returned his obligations to his several relations, according to their respective good offices towards him, not forgetting his wife, having bequeathed to that excellent woman, who patiently endured much for his sake, several delightful villas, besides a large sum of money. And indeed she deserved so much the more at his hands, in proportion to the

him, but if the son obtained his freedom, he again came under his dominion. And this authority could not be wholly disannulled till the son had been thrice sold, and as often recovered his liberty, and then it entirely ceased. The law vested the same power likewise as fully in the adoptive father as in the natural. Justinian observes, this authority was peculiar to the Romans, and followed by no other nation whatsoever. Inst. l. 1. *M.*

displeasure she incurred on her marriage with him. It was thought unworthy a person of her birth and repute, so long left a widow by her former husband, by whom she had issue, to marry, in the decline of her life, an old man, merely for his wealth, and who was so sickly and infirm that, even had he passed the best years of his youth and health with her, she might well have been heartily tired of him. He had so entirely lost the use of all his limbs that he could not move himself in bed without assistance; and the only enjoyment he had of his riches was to contemplate them. He was even (sad and disgusting to relate) reduced to the necessity of having his teeth washed and scrubbed by others: in allusion to which he used frequently to say, when he was complaining of the indignities which his infirmities obliged him to suffer, that he was every day compelled to lick his servant's fingers. Still, however, he lived on, and was willing to accept of life upon such terms. That he lived so long as he did was particularly owing, indeed, to the care of his wife, who, whatever reputation she might lose at first by her marriage, acquired great honour by her unwearied devotion as his wife.—Thus I have given you all the news of the town, where nothing is talked of but Tullus. It is expected his curiosities will shortly be sold by auction. He had such an abundant collection of very old statues that he actually filled an extensive garden with them, the very same day he purchased it; not to mention numberless other antiques, lying neglected in his lumber-room. If you have anything worth telling me in return, I hope you will not refuse the trouble of writing to me: not only as we are all of us naturally fond, you know, of news, but because example has a very beneficial influence upon our own conduct. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* MAXIMUS.

I find my joy and my solace in literature: and as there is no pleasure I prefer to it, so there is no sadness it does not alleviate. In this time of trouble then, caused by the ill-health of my wife, the dangerous sickness of some of my servants, and the death of others, I fly to my books as the

sovereign alleviation of my sorrows. They do me this service—they make me understand my troubles better, and bear them more patiently. It is a standing rule with me, before I publish any of my productions, to consult the opinion of my friends, especially yours. I beg therefore you would look very carefully over the performance I am sending you with this letter, as I am afraid the disquietude of my mind may have prevented me from giving it the attention I ought. For though I could command myself so far as to write, I could not do so so far as to write with ease and cheerfulness. Certainly there is a pleasure in study, but studies themselves prosper best when the heart is light. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* Gallus.

Those works of art or nature which are usually the motives of our travels are often overlooked and neglected if they lie within our reach: whether it be that we are naturally less inquisitive concerning those things which are near us, while our curiosity is excited by remote objects; or because the easiness of gratifying a desire is always sure to damp it; or, perhaps, that we put off from time to time going and seeing what we know we have an opportunity of seeing when we please. Whatever the reason be, it is certain there are numberless curiosities in and near Rome which we have not only never seen, but even never so much as heard of: and yet had they been the produce of Greece, or Egypt, or Asia, or any other country which we admire as fertile and productive of belief in wonders, we should long since have heard of them, read of them, and enquired into them. For myself at least, I confess, I have lately been entertained with one of these curiosities, to which I was an entire stranger before. My wife's grandfather desired I would look over his estate near Ameria.* As I was walking over his grounds, I was shown a lake that lies below them, called Vadimon,† about which several very extraordinary things

* Now called Amelia, a town in Ombria. *M.*

† Now Laghetto di Bassano. *M.*

are told. I went up to this lake. It is perfectly circular in form, like a wheel lying on the ground; there is not the least curve or projection of the shore, but all is regular, even, and just as if it had been hollowed and cut out by the hand of art. The water is of a clear sky-blue, though with somewhat of a greenish tinge; its smell is sulphureous, and its flavour has medicinal properties, and is deemed of great efficacy in all fractures of the limbs, which it is supposed to heal. Though of but moderate extent, yet the winds have a great effect upon it, throwing it into violent agitation. No vessels are suffered to sail here, as its waters are held sacred; * but several floating islands † swim about it, covered with reeds and rushes, and with whatever other plants the surrounding marshy ground and the edge itself of the lake produce in greater abundance. Each island has its peculiar shape and size, but the edges of all of them are worn away by their frequent collision with the shore and one another. They are all of the same height and motion; as their respective roots, which are formed like the keel of a boat, may be seen hanging not very far down in the water, and at an equal depth, on whichever side you stand. Sometimes they move in a cluster, and seem to form one entire little continent; sometimes they are dispersed into different quarters by the winds; at other times, when it is calm, they float up and down separately. You may frequently see one of the larger islands sailing along with a lesser joined to it, like a ship with its long boat; or, perhaps, seeming to strive which shall out-swim the other: then again they are all driven to the same spot, and by joining themselves to the shore, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, lessen or restore the size of the lake in this part or that, accordingly, till at last uniting in the centre they restore it to its usual size. The sheep which graze upon the borders of this lake frequently go upon these islands to feed, without perceiving that they have left the shore, until

* See above, note ‡, letter viii. of this book.

† The credit of this account does not rest entirely upon our author: Pliny the elder mentions these floating islands (l. ii. 95), and so does Seneca, who accounts for them upon philosophical principles (Q. N l. iii. 25). *M.*

they are alarmed by finding themselves surrounded with water; as though they had been forcibly conveyed and placed there. Afterwards, when the wind drives them back again, they as little perceive their return as their departure. This lake empties itself into a river, which, after running a little way, sinks under ground, and, if anything is thrown in, brings it up again where the stream emerges.—I have given you this account because I imagined it would not be less new, nor less agreeable, to you than it was to me; as I know you take the same pleasure as myself in contemplating the works of nature. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* Arrianus.

Nothing, in my opinion, gives a more amiable and becoming grace to our studies, as well as manners, than to temper the serious with the gay, lest the former should degenerate into melancholy, and the latter run up into levity. Upon this plan it is that I diversify my graver works with compositions of a lighter nature. I had chosen a convenient place and season for some productions of that sort to make their appearance in; and designing to accustom them early to the tables of the idle, I fixed upon the month of July,* which is usually a time of vacation to the courts of justice, in order to read them to some of

* The months of July and August were a time of vacation to the Roman lawyers, the courts of justice being then shut up, that the farmers might not be interrupted in their harvest, by being obliged to attend their law-suits at Rome.

. . . . '*Messesque reversae*
Dimisere forum; nec jam tibi turba reorum
Vestibulo, querulique rogant exire clientes;
Cessat centeni moderatrix judicis hasta.'
Statius Syl. l. iv. 50.

Returning harvest bids contention cease,
And through the wrangling forum all is peace;
No teasing clients now besiege thy way,
Nor judges sage the solemn spear display.'

However, the courts, as appears from this letter, were sometimes opened during this season of vacation, upon cases, perhaps, of particular emergency. *M.*

my friends I had collected together; and accordingly I placed a desk before each couch. But as I happened that morning to be unexpectedly called away to attend a cause, I took occasion to preface my recital with an apology. I entreated my audience not to impute it to me as any want of due regard for the business to which I had invited them that on the very day I had appointed for reading my performances to a small circle of my friends I did not refuse my services to others in their law affairs. I assured them I would observe the same rule in my writings, and should always give the preference to business, before pleasure; to serious engagements, before amusing ones; and to my friends before myself. The poems I recited consisted of a variety of subjects in different metres. It is thus that we who dare not rely for much upon our abilities endeavour to avoid satiating our readers. In compliance with the earnest solicitation of my audience, I recited for two days successively; but not in the manner that several practise, by passing over the feebler passages, and making a merit of so doing: on the contrary, I omitted nothing, and freely confessed it. I read the whole, that I might correct the whole; which it is impossible those who only select particular passages can do. The latter method, indeed, may have more the appearance of modesty, and perhaps respect; but the former shows greater simplicity, as well as a more affectionate disposition towards the audience. For the belief that a man's friends have so much regard for him as not to be weary on these occasions, is a sure indication of the love he bears them. Otherwise, what good do friends do you who assemble merely for their own amusement? He who had rather find his friend's performance correct, than make it so, is to be regarded as a stranger, or one who is too lackadaisical to give himself any trouble. Your affection for me leaves me no room to doubt that you are impatient to read my book, even in its present very imperfect condition. And so you shall, but not until I have made those corrections which were the principal inducement of my recital. You are already acquainted with some parts of it; but even those, after they have been improved (or perhaps spoiled, as is sometimes the case by the delay of excessive revision) will seem quite new to

you. For when a piece has undergone various changes, it gets to look new, even in those very parts which remain unaltered. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* Geminus.

Don't you know that class of people who, though under the abject dominion of every kind of passion themselves, show a sort of malicious resentment against the vices of others; and are most severe upon those whom they most resemble? Yet, surely, a kindly lenity of disposition, even in those who stand in no need of the indulgence of others, is of all other virtues the one which most becomes them. The most perfect and best of all characters, in my estimation, is his who is as ready to pardon the errors of mankind as if he were every day guilty of some himself; and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault as if he never forgave one. It is a rule then which we should upon all occasions, both private and public, most religiously observe, 'to be inexorable towards ourselves, while we treat the rest of the world with tenderness, not excepting even those who forgive none but themselves;' remembering always what the humane, and, *therefore*, as well as upon other accounts, the *great* Thrasea used frequently to say: '*He who hates vice hates mankind.*' You ask, perhaps, who has provoked me to write in this strain? Well, a person lately—but of that when we meet—though, upon second thoughts, not even then, lest, in condemning and exposing *his* conduct, I should act counter to that maxim I particularly recommend. Whoever, therefore, and whatever he may be, shall remain buried in silence: for there is no use in setting a mark upon the man, for the sake of example, while there will be a great deal in sparing him, for leniency's sake. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII. *To* Marcellinus.

The deep concern I am under for the death of Junius Avitus has rendered me incapable of business, study, or

amusement. He was invested with the laticlave * in my house, and in all the honours he solicited, he was constantly assisted by my interest. I will add, too, his affection and esteem for me were so great that he formed his manners, and regulated his conduct, according to my guidance and direction: a disposition very rarely met with in our young men nowadays, for who among them will deign to submit to the experience of their elders or the authority of their superiors? They think themselves at once full of all wisdom and knowledge; there is no one they look up to, no one they imitate, and they imagine they are a sufficient example to themselves. But Avitus was of a very different stamp; he especially showed his wisdom in believing there were some who had more; and his knowledge, in his desire to learn. He was ever consulting me upon some point relating to his studies, or his conduct; and he always parted from you with the feeling that he had been improved, either on account of the attention with which he listened, or the strict enquiries he made about everything. With what respect he treated Servianus, one of the most accomplished men of the age! Avitus knew how to value such uncommon merit, as well as to endear himself to him in his turn. Accordingly when Servianus went as lieutenant from Germany into Pannonia,† he attended him as tribune; not so much in the character of fellow soldier as of friend and admirer. With what diligence and due deference did he execute the office of quaestor under several consuls, who all esteemed him, not only as an useful and experienced servant, but as a pleasing and agreeable companion? With what vigilant application did he solicit this very aedileship,‡ from the

* See book ii. letter ix. note *.

† A very extensive province, comprehending part of Austria, Hungary, &c. *M.*

‡ The aediles were at first two officers chosen out of the body of the commons, in order to assist the tribunes in the discharge of some particular parts of their office, the chief of which was the care of public edifices. Others were afterwards elected out of the nobility, to inspect public games, determine causes relating to the selling or exchanging of estates, to supervise the public stores of corn, and other provisions, &c. Ken. Antiq. pp. 116, 117. *M.*

enjoyment of which he is now prematurely snatched? A reflection that gives a peculiar poignancy to my grief for the loss of him. His unavailing labours, his fruitless canvassings, and the honour which he merited only, never enjoyed, are for ever before me. The circumstance of his having first put on the laticlave under my roof; the first and the last votes I ever gave him; the conversations we have had, and the consultations we have held, all return fresh upon my mind. It affects me when I consider his youth, and reflect upon the irreparable loss his family has sustained: an aged parent, a young wife to whom he had not been married much above a year; an infant daughter just born; so many pleasing hopes, so many tender joys, all reversed and destroyed in one day! Only just elected aedile, a young husband and father, he was suddenly snatched from the midst of these enjoyments, and has left behind him an honour untasted, a mother inconsolable, a widowed wife, and an orphan infant, who will have the misfortune of never having known her father! But what increases my tears upon this melancholy occasion is that, being absent when this accident happened, I never knew of his sickness, till I heard of his death, and had no time to prepare myself for this cruel stroke, by previous apprehension!—Such is the present distress of my mind!—You must not wonder then that it is the whole subject of my letter; for I am not able, at present, to think or talk of anything else. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV. *To* Maximus.

My affection for you obliges me, not indeed to direct you (for you are far above the want of a guide), but to admonish you carefully to observe and resolutely to put in practice what you already know, that is, in other words, to know it to better purpose. Consider that you are sent to that noble province, Achaia, the real and genuine Greece, where politeness, learning, and even agriculture itself, are supposed to have taken their first rise; sent to regulate the condition of free cities; sent, that is, to a society of men

who breathe the spirit of true manhood and liberty; * who have maintained the rights they received from Nature, by courage, by virtue, by alliances; in a word, by civil and religious faith. Revere the gods their founders; their ancient glory, and even that very antiquity itself which, venerable in men, is sacred in states. Honour them therefore for their deeds of old renown, nay, their very legendary traditions. Grant to every one his full dignity, privileges, yes, and the indulgence of his very vanity. Remember it was from this nation we derived our laws; † that she did

* 'It is remarkable that even after Greece was absorbed in the Roman empire, and became a province to it under the name of Achaia, it did not lose with its power and sovereignty that lively sense and love of liberty which was the peculiar character of that people, amongst whom the arts were produced and brought to perfection. The Romans, when they had subdued Greece, left that generous, brave, polite people in possession of many of their rights and privileges. And they maintained such an ardent zeal for liberty that, to name no other instances of it, when the civil wars happened in Italy, the Athenians very warmly espoused the part of Pompey, who fought for the republic: and after Caesar was killed, they erected statues in honour of Brutus and Cassius, near to those of Harmodius and Aristogiton, their ancient deliverers. It was hence Greece, Athens in particular, after it was very much fallen and degenerated, continued still to be the metropolis of sciences, the school of all the fine arts, the standard and centre of good taste in all works of genius, to Cicero's time, and long afterwards; insomuch that Rome sent its most illustrious youth to be perfected there in polite literature, eloquence, philosophy, and all the ingenious arts and sciences; and the emperors who loved learning, if they could not go to Greece and become scholars there, as some of them did, brought Greece to them by inviting and receiving into their palaces its most celebrated professors and artists, and even intrusting the education of their children with Greek masters. Now their continuing to excel in the arts and sciences, to what else can it be attributed but to this, that, with some small remains of liberty, they retained the spirit of liberty, the love of it, and zeal for it? It was indeed in consequence of this alone that they maintained, in some degree, even till Italy was quite overrun with barbarism, a sovereignty the Romans could not take from them; a sovereignty in science, arts, and good taste. 'Tis impossible to account for it in any other way: they preserved the arts in a very great degree, because they retained the spirit of liberty in a very extraordinary one.' Turnbull on Ancient Painting, p. 100. *M.*

† About the year of Rome 300, that is, 452 years before Christ, ambassadors were sent into Greece, to make a collection of such laws and customs as the wisdom of that cultured people had established, particularly the famous ones of Solon. At their return, these laws were approved and confirmed, and, together with some additional ones,

not receive ours by conquest, but gave us hers by favour Remember, it is Athens to which you go; it is Lacedaemon you govern; and to deprive such a people of the declining shadow, the remaining name of liberty would be cruel, inhuman, barbarous. Physicians, you see, though in sickness there is no difference between freedom and slavery, yet treat persons of the former rank with more tenderness than those of the latter. Reflect what these cities once were; but so reflect as not to despise them for what they are now. Far be pride and asperity from my friend; nor fear, by a proper condescension, to lay yourself open to contempt. Can he who is vested with the power and bears the ensigns of authority, can *he* fail of meeting with respect, unless by pursuing base and sordid measures, and first breaking through that reverence he owes to himself? Ill, believe me, is power proved by insult; ill can terror command veneration, and far more effectual is affection in obtaining one's purpose than fear. For terror operates no longer than its object is present, but love produces its effects with its object at a distance: and as absence changes the former into hatred, it raises the latter into respect. And therefore you ought (and I cannot but repeat it too often), you ought to well consider the nature of your office, and to represent to yourself how great and important the task is of governing a free state. For what can be better for society than such government, what can be more precious than freedom? How ignominious then must his conduct be who turns good government into anarchy, and liberty into slavery? To these considerations let me add, that you have an established reputation to maintain: the fame you acquired by the administration of the quaestorship in Bithynia,* the good opinion of the emperor, the credit you obtained when you were tribune and praetor, in a word, this very government, which may be looked upon as the reward of your former services, are all so

were engraven on ten tables of brass. Two other tables of laws were soon afterwards added to these, which, together with the former, went by the name of the twelve tables, and were looked upon as the fountain of all law, public and private. Liv. l. iii. c. 31. Ferrière, Hist. des Lois civ. c. 5. *M.*

* A province in Anatolia, or Asia Minor. *M.*

many glorious weights which are incumbent upon you to support with suitable dignity. The more strenuously therefore you ought to endeavour that it may not be said you showed greater urbanity, integrity, and ability in a province remote from Rome, than in one which lies so much nearer the capital; in the midst of a nation of slaves, than among a fre people; that it may not be remarked, that it was chance, and not judgment, appointed you to this office; that your character was unknown and unexperienced, not tried and approved. For (and it is a maxim which your reading and conversation must have often suggested to you) it is a far greater disgrace losing the name one has once acquired than never to have attained it. I again beg you to be persuaded that I did not write this letter with a design of instruction, but of reminder. Though indeed, if I had, it would have only been in consequence of the great affection I bear you: a sentiment which I am in no fear of carrying beyond its just bounds: for there can be no danger of excess where one cannot love too well. **Farewell.**

BOOK IX.

LETTER I. *To* Maximus.

I have frequently recommended you to be as expeditious as possible in publishing what you have written either in defence of yourself or against Planta; or rather indeed (as the circumstances of the case demanded) what you drew up for both purposes; but I particularly urge this advice upon you *now* that I hear he is dead. For, although you have read this piece to many of your friends, and put it into the hands of others, yet I should be extremely sorry that the world should suspect you only began after his death what it is most certain you had finished during his life. Let not your reputation for firmness and resolution be called in question. And it will not when both the candid and the malicious world shall know it was not the death of your adversary that emboldened you to write, but that this event only anticipated the opportunity of publishing this piece. And thus you will avoid the imputation,

'With coward joy to triumph o'er the dead:'

for what you wrote before his death will be considered as published during his lifetime, provided you publish it soon. If therefore you have any other work on hand, do postpone that for the present, and give your last finishing touches to this performance. It seemed to me indeed, when I formerly read it, to want no improvements; and so it ought now to seem to you, as neither the subject itself requires nor the time will admit of longer delay. Farewell.

LETTER II. *To* Sabinus.

Your earnest request that I would write you very frequent and very long letters is extremely agreeable to me.

* Hom. Od. lib. xxii. v. 412.

If I have forborne to do so, it has been partly because you were busy and I did not like to disturb you; and partly from some very cold and uninteresting affairs of my own, which engage my thoughts, and at the same time suppress my ideas. Besides, I have not a sufficient supply of matter for frequent letters; and am by no means in the same situation that Tully was, whom you point out to me as an example. He not only possessed a most enlarged mind, but the circumstances of the times in which he lived furnished him with a variety of noble occasions of exercising it. As for myself, you know (without my telling you) to what narrow limits I am confined, unless my letters were to turn upon the fictitious and pedantic topics of the schools. But when I consider you in the midst of arms and encampments, animated by martial music, or fatigued with toil and heat; how absurd would it be to talk to you upon such subjects? This is my apology, and I think it a reasonable one; however, I almost wish you would not accept it: for to reject the excuses of a friend upon such an occasion, be they ever so just, is an evident proof of a warm affection. Farewell.

LETTER III. *To* PAULINUS.

Others may think as they please; but the happiest man, in my opinion, is he who lives in the conscious anticipation of an honest and enduring name, and secure of future glory in the eyes of posterity. I confess, if I had not the reward of an immortal reputation in view, I should prefer a life of uninterrupted ease and indolent retirement to any other. There seem to be two points worthy every man's attention: endless fame, or the short duration of life. Those who are actuated by the former motive ought to exert themselves to the very utmost of their power; while such as are influenced by the latter should quietly resign themselves to repose, and not wear out a short life in perishable pursuits, as we see so many doing—and then sink at last into utter self-contempt, in the midst of a wretched and fruitless course of false industry. These are my daily reflections, which I communicate to you, in

order to renounce them if you do not agree with them; as undoubtedly you will, who are for ever meditating some glorious and immortal enterprise. Farewell.

LETTER IV. *To* Macrinus.

I should fear you would think the speech which you will receive with this letter immoderately long if it were not of such a nature as to require being divided into sections: which, consisting of distinct charges, has the appearance of so many separate speeches. Wherever therefore you begin or end, you may consider what follows, either as connected with what precedes, or making of itself a new subject; so that you may look upon it as very diffuse upon the whole, and yet as extremely concise with respect to its particular parts. Farewell.

LETTER V. *To* Tiro.

You deserve the highest praise for the mildness with which, as I am informed (and I make very strict enquiry) you administer justice in your province; one principal branch of which is to distinguish merit in every degree, and so to gain the love of the lower rank as to preserve at the same time the affection of their superiors. But it is an error many have fallen into, that while they endeavour to avoid the appearance of favouring the great, they run into the contrary extreme, and gain the character of acting ill-manneredly or ill-naturedly; an error which you are far from guilty of, I well know. However, I cannot forbear adding a caution to my praise, and recommending you to conduct yourself in such a manner as to preserve the proper distinctions of rank and dignity, which, if once confounded, and all thrown upon a level, nothing can be more unequal than that kind of equality. Farewell.

LETTER VI. *To* Calvisius.

I have spent these several days past, in reading and writing, with the most pleasing tranquillity imaginable.

You will ask, 'How that can possibly be in the midst of Rome?' It was the time of celebrating the Circensian* games; an entertainment for which I have not the least taste. They have no novelty, no variety to recommend them, nothing, in short, one would wish to see twice. It does the more surprise me therefore that so many thousand people should be possessed with the childish passion of desiring so often to see a parcel of horses gallop, and men standing upright in their chariots. If, indeed, it were the swiftness of the horses, or the skill of the men that attracted them, there might be some pretence of reason for it. But it is the *dress*† they like, it is the dress that takes their fancy. And if, in the midst of the course and contest, the different parties were to change colours, their different partisans would change sides, and instantly desert the very same men and horses whom just before they were eagerly following with their eyes, as far as they could see, and shouting out their names with all their might. Such mighty charms, such wondrous power reside in the colour of a paltry tunic! And this not only with the common crowd (more contemptible than the dress they espouse), but even with serious-thinking people. When I observe such men thus insatiably fond of so silly, so low, so uninteresting, so common an entertainment, I congratulate myself on my indifference to these pleasures: and am glad to employ the leisure of this season upon my books, which others throw away upon the most idle occupations. Farewell.

* These games were originally of Grecian extraction, but first introduced among the Romans by Romulus, in order to favour his design of carrying off the Sabine virgins: they consisted of horse and chariot races, &c. *M.*

† The performers at these games were divided into companies, distinguished by the particular colour of their habits; the principal of which were the white, the red, the blue, and the green. Accordingly the spectators favoured one or the other colour, as humour and caprice inclined them. In the reign of Justinian a tumult[1] arose in Constantinople, occasioned merely by a contention among the partizans of these several colours, wherein no less than 30,000 men lost their lives. *M.*

[1] Procop. de Bel.. Persic. l. 1.

LETTER VII. *To* Romanus.

I am pleased to find by your letter that you are engaged in building; for I may now defend my own conduct by your example. I am myself employed in the same sort of work; and since I have you, who shall deny I have reason on my side? Our situations too are not dissimilar; your buildings are carried on upon the sea-coast, mine are rising upon the side of the Larian lake. I have several villas upon the borders of this lake, but there are two particularly in which, as I take most delight, so they give me most employment. They are both situated like those at Baiae:* one of them stands upon a rock, and overlooks

* Now called Castello di Baia, in Terra di Lavoro. It was the place the Romans chose for their winter retreat; and which they frequented upon account of its warm baths. Some few ruins of the beautiful villas that once covered this delightful coast still remain; and nothing can give one a higher idea of the prodigious expense and magnificence of the Romans in their private buildings than the manner in which some of these were situated. It appears from this letter, as well as from several other passages in the classic writers, that they actually projected into the sea, being erected upon vast piles sunk for that purpose. Virgil draws a beautiful simile from this custom, where he compares the massy spear which Turnus let fly at Bitias, to one of those enormous piles thrown into the Baian sea.

> 'Qualis in Euboico Baiarum littore quondam
> Saxea pila cadit, magnis quam molibus ante
> Constructam jaciunt ponto; sic illa ruinam
> Prona trahit penitusque vadis illisa recumbit;
> Miscent se maria, et nigrae attolluntur arenae.'
> Aen. ix. 710.

TRANSLATION.

> 'So from the Baian mole, whose structures rise
> High o'er the flood, a massy fragment flies;
> The rapid rolling pile all headlong sweeps
> With one vast length of ruin to the deeps;
> Thick boil the billows, and on every side
> Work the dark sands, and blacken all the tide.'
> (Pitt.)

Horace also, in one of his moral Odes, points out and exposes this amazing luxury of building:

> 'Tu secanda marmora
> Locas sub ipsum funus; et sepulcri

the lake; the other actually touches it. The first, supported as it were by the lofty buskin,* I call my *tragic;* the other, as resting upon the humble sock, my *comic* villa. Each has its own peculiar charm, recommending it to its possessor so much more on account of this very difference. The former commands a wider, the latter enjoys a nearer view of the lake. One, by a gentle curve, embraces a little bay; the other, being built upon a greater height, forms two. *Here* you have a strait walk extending itself along the banks of the lake; *there*, a spacious terrace that falls by a gentle descent towards it. The former does not feel the force of the waves; the latter breaks them; from *that* you see the fishing-vessels; from *this* you may fish yourself, and throw your line out of your room, and almost from your bed, as from off a boat. It is the beauties therefore these agreeable villas possess that tempt me to add to them

Immemor, struis domos;
Marisque Baiis obstrepentis urges
Summovere littora,
Parum locuples continente ripa.'
Carm. ii. 18.

TRANSLATION.

'You, with thoughtless pride elate,
Unconscious of impending fate,
Command the pillar'd dome to rise,
When, lo! thy tomb forgotten lies;
And though the waves indignant roar,
Forward you urge the Baian shore,
While earth's too narrow bounds in vain
Thy guilty progress would restrain.'
(Mr. Francis.) *M.*

And here, indeed, luxury seems to have reigned in her most licentious refinements of all kinds; while the principal amusement of the place consisted in sailing upon the gulf in gaily painted barks, accompanied with all the melting softness that exquisite wines, fine women, and rapturous music could inspire. There was something even in the natural as well as artificial turn of the scene, which seemed formed to throw the mind into a state of softness and dissipation: insomuch that Seneca, with all his stoical fortitude, durst not trust himself in it above a day. See Seneca, Ep. 51. *M.*

* The buskin was a kind of high shoe worn upon the stage by the actors of tragedy, in order to give them a more heroical elevation of stature; as the sock was something between a shoe and stocking, and appropriated to the comic players. *M.*

those which are wanting.—But I need not assign a reason to you; who, undoubtedly, will think it a sufficient one that I follow your example. Farewell.

LETTER VIII. *To* Augurinus.

Were I to begin praising *you*, from whom I have received so much praise, I am afraid it might look as if I did so, not so much to show my judgment, as my gratitude Nevertheless I will not scruple to say that I think all your writings are full of beauty; especially, you may be sure, those of which I am the subject. And the same reason will account both for their deserving that character, and for my thinking so: for as, on the one hand, you ever succeed best when friendship inspires you, so, on the other, I always like best what flatters my vanity. Farewell.

LETTER IX. *To* Colo.

I greatly admire the generous grief you show for the death of Pompeius Quintianus, as it is a proof that your affection for your departed friend does not terminate with his life. Far different from those who love, or rather, I should more properly say, who counterfeit love to none but the living. Nor indeed even *that* any longer than they are the favourites of fortune; for the unhappy and the dead are equally forgotten by them. But *your* friendship is raised upon a more lasting foundation, and the constancy of your affection can only end with your life. Quintianus, most certainly, well deserved to meet with that generous warmth from his friends of which he was himself so bright an example. He loved them in prosperity; protected them in adversity; lamented them in death. What an open countenance his was! how deliberate and deferential he was in conversation! how equally did he temper gravity with gaiety! how fond he was of learning! what a discerning judgment he possessed! how dutiful to a father of a very different character! and how happily did he reconcile filial piety with inflexible virtue

and continue a good son, without forfeiting the title of a good man!—But why do I aggravate your affliction by reminding you of his worth? Yet I know your affection for the memory of this excellent youth is so strong that you had rather endure that pain than suffer his virtues to be passed over in silence; especially by me, whose applause, you imagine, will adorn his actions, extend his fame, and restore him, as it were, to that life from which he is prematurely snatched. Farewell.

LETTER X. *To* Tacitus.*

I should be glad enough to follow your advice; but there is such a scarcity of boars that it is impossible to reconcile Minerva with Diana, who, you think, ought to be worshipped together. I must content myself, then, with paying my single devotion to the former; though in an easy, lazy sort of way, as considering the heat of the season, and the privileged indolence of retirement. I composed, indeed, a few trifles on my journey here, which are only fit to be destroyed, as they are written in the same negligent and inattentive style in which one usually chats upon the road. Since I came to my villa, I have made some few additions to them, not finding myself in a humour to turn my thoughts to things of more consequence. Thus my poems, which you suppose are being brought to such a pitch of perfection amid the silence and solemnity of woods and groves, are, really, quite at a stand.

* Catanaeus, with some other commentators, imagines this letter does not belong to Pliny, but is the answer of Tacitus to the 6th epistle of the first book. He supports this conjecture, indeed, by no authority; only thinks it falls in exactly with the letter to which he supposes it an answer, and fancies he discovers something in the style different from our author's manner. But upon a comparison of the two letters, there seems little reason to believe one is an answer to the other. And as to the difference of style (if there really be any) which the translator confesses he has not penetration enough to discover, it is much too precarious an argument to have any weight in the case. The supposition of Casaubon seems more probable, who thinks this epistle might be occasioned by one from Tacitus, in which he reminded Pliny of his own advice to him, in that letter to which Catanaeus imagines this an answer. *M.*

But I have revised a short speech or two; though that kind of work is disagreeable and repulsive enough, and has a much nearer resemblance to rustic labours than rural amusements. Farewell.

LETTER XI. *To* Geminus.

Your letter was particularly acceptable to me, as it mentioned your desire that I would send you something of mine, addressed to you, to insert in your works. I shall find a more appropriate occasion of complying with your request than that which you propose, the subject you point out to me being attended with some objections; and when you re-consider it, you will think so.—As I did not imagine there were any booksellers at Lugdunum,* I am so much the more pleased to learn that my works are sold there. I rejoice to find they maintain the character abroad which they raised at home; and I begin to flatter myself they have some merit, since persons of such distant countries are agreed in their opinion with regard to them. Farewell.

LETTER XII. *To* Junior.

A certain friend of mine lately chastised his son, in my presence, for being somewhat too expensive in the matter of dogs and horses. 'And pray,' I asked him, when the youth had left us 'did you never commit a fault yourself which deserved your father's correction? Did you never? I repeat. Nay, are you not sometimes even now guilty of errors which your son, were he in your place, might with equal gravity reprove? Are not all mankind subject to indiscretions? And have we not each of us our particular follies in which we fondly indulge ourselves?'

The great affection I have for you induced me to set this instance of unreasonable severity before you—a caution not to treat *your* son with too much harshness and severity. Consider, he is but a boy, and that there

* Lyons.

was a time when you were so too. In exerting, therefore, the authority of a father, remember always that you are a man, and the parent of a man. Farewell.

LETTER XIII. *To* QUADRATUS.

The pleasure and attention with which you read the vindication I published of Helvidius,* has greatly raised your curiosity, it seems, to be informed of those particulars relating to that affair, which are not mentioned in the defence; as you were too young to be present yourself at that transaction. When Domitian was assassinated, a glorious opportunity, I thought, offered itself to me of pursuing the guilty, vindicating the injured, and advancing my own reputation. But amidst an infinite variety of the blackest crimes, none appeared to me more atrocious than that a senator, of praetorian dignity, and invested with the sacred character of a judge, should, even in the very senate itself, lay violent hands upon a member † of that body, one of consular rank, and who then stood arraigned before him. Besides this general consideration, I also happened to be on terms of particular intimacy with Helvidius, as far as this was possible with one who, through fear of the times, endeavoured to veil the lustre of his fame, and his virtues, in obscurity and retirement. Arria likewise, and her daughter Fannia, who was mother-in-law to Helvidius, were in the number of my friends. But it was not so much private attachments as the honour of the public, a just indignation at the action, and the danger of the example if it should pass unpunished, that animated me upon the occasion. At the first restoration of liberty,‡ every man singled out his particular enemy (though it

* He was accused of treason, under pretence that in a dramatic piece which he composed he had, in the characters of Paris and Oenone, reflected upon Domitian for divorcing his wife Domitia. Suet. in Vit. Domit. c. 10. *M.*

† Helvidius.

‡ Upon the accession of Nerva to the empire, after the death of Domitian. *M.*

must be confessed, those only of a lower rank), and, in the midst of much clamour and confusion, no sooner brought the charge than procured the condemnation. But for myself, I thought it would be more reasonable and more effectual, not to take advantage of the general resentment of the public, but to crush this criminal with the single weight of his own enormous guilt. When therefore the first heat of public indignation began to cool, and declining passion gave way to justice, though I was at that time under great affliction for the loss of my wife,* I sent to Anteia, the widow of Helvidius, and desired her to come to me, as my late misfortune prevented me from appearing in public. When she arrived, I said to her, 'I am resolved not to suffer the injuries your husband has received, to pass unrevenged; let Arria and Fannia' (who were just returned from exile) 'know this; and consider together whether you would care to join with me in the prosecution. Not that I want an associate, but I am not so jealous of my own glory as to refuse to share it with you in this affair.' She accordingly carried this message; and they all agreed to the proposal without the least hesitation. It happened very opportunely that the senate was to meet within three days. It was a general rule with me to consult, in all my affairs, with Corellius, a person of the greatest far-sightedness and wisdom this age has produced. However, in the present case, I relied entirely upon my own discretion, being apprehensive he would not approve of my design, as he was very cautious and deliberate. But though I did not previously take counsel with him (experience having taught me, never to do so with a person concerning a question we have already determined, where he has a right to expect that one shall be decided by his judgment), yet I could not forbear acquainting him with my resolution at the time I intended to carry it into execution. The senate being assembled, I came into the house, and begged I might have leave to make a motion; which I did in few words, and with general assent. When I began to touch upon the charge, and point out the person

* Our author's first wife; of whom we have no particular account. After her death, he married his favourite Calpurnia. *M.*

I intended to accuse (though as yet without mentioning him by name), I was attacked on all sides. 'Let us know,' exclaims one, 'who is the subject of this informal motion?' 'Who is it' (asked another) 'that is thus accused, without acquainting the house with his name, and his crime?' 'Surely' (added a third) 'we who have survived the late dangerous times may expect now, at least, to remain in security.' I heard all this with perfect calmness, and without being in the least alarmed. Such is the effect of conscious integrity; and so much difference is there with respect to inspiring confidence or fear, whether the world had only rather one should forbear a certain act, or absolutely condemns it. It would be too tedious to relate all that was advanced, by different parties, upon this occasion. At length the consul said, 'You will be at liberty, Secundus, to propose what you think proper when your turn comes to give your opinion upon the order of the day.'* I replied, 'You must allow me a liberty which you never yet refused to any;' and so sat down: when immediately the house went upon another business. In the meanwhile, one of my consular friends took me aside, and, with great earnestness telling me he thought I had carried on this affair with more boldness than prudence, used every method of reproof and persuasion to prevail with me to desist; adding at the same time that I should certainly, if I persevered, render myself obnoxious to some future prince. 'Be it so,' I returned, 'should he prove a bad one.' Scarcely had he left me when a second came up: 'Whatever,' said he, 'are you attempting? Why ever will you ruin yourself? Do you consider the risks you expose yourself to? Why will you presume too much on the present situation of public affairs, when it is so uncertain what turn they may hereafter take? You are attacking a man who is actually at the head of the treasury, and will shortly be consul. Besides, recollect what credit he has, and with what powerful friendships he is supported?' Upon which he named a certain person, who (not without several strong

* It is very remarkable that, when any senator was asked his opinion in the house, he had the privilege of speaking as long as he pleased upon any other affair before he came to the point in question. Aul. Gell. lib. iv. c. 10. *M.*

and suspicious rumours) was then at the head of a powerful army in the east. I replied,

'"All I've foreseen, and oft in thought revolv'd;" *

and am willing, if fate shall so decree, to suffer in an honest cause, provided I can draw vengeance down upon a most infamous one.' The time for the members to give their opinion was now arrived. Domitius Apollinaris, the consul elect, spoke first; after him Fabricius Vejento, then Fabius Maximinus, Vettius Proculus next (who married my wife's mother, and who was colleague of Publicius Certus, the person on whom the debate turned), and last of all Ammius Flaccus. They all defended Certus, as if I had named him (though I had not yet so much as once mentioned him), and entered upon his justification as if I had exhibited a specific charge. It is not necessary to repeat in this place what they respectively said, having given it all at length in their words, in the speech above-mentioned. Avidius Quietus and Cornutus Tertullus answered them. The former observed, 'that it was extremely unjust not to hear the complaints of those who thought themselves injured, and therefore that Arria and Fannia ought not to be denied the privilege of laying their grievances before the house; and that the point for the consideration of the senate was not the rank of the person, but the merit of the cause.' Then Cornutus rose up and acquainted the house, 'that, as he was appointed guardian to the daughter of Helvidius by the consuls, upon the petition of her mother and her father-in-law, he felt himself compelled to fulfil the duty of his trust. In the execution of which, however, he would endeavour to set some bounds to his indignation by following that great example of moderation which those excellent women† had set, who contented themselves with barely informing the senate of the cruelties which Certus committed in order to carry on his infamous adulation; and therefore,' he said, 'he would only move that, if a punishment due to a crime so notoriously known should be remitted, Certus might at least be branded with some mark of the displeasure of that august assembly.'

* Aeneid, lib. vi. v. 105.

† Arria and Fannia.

Satrius Rufus spoke next, and, meaning to steer a middle course, expressed himself with considerable ambiguity. 'I am of opinion,' said he, 'that great injustice will be done to Certus if he is not acquitted (for I do not scruple to mention his name, since the friends of Arria and Fannia, as well as his own, have done so too), nor indeed have we any occasion for anxiety upon this account. We who think well of the man shall judge him with the same impartiality as the rest; but if he is innocent, as I hope he is, and shall be glad to find, I think this house may very justly deny the present motion till some charge has been proved against him.' Thus, according to the respective order in which they were called upon,* they delivered their several opinions. When it came to my turn, I rose up, and, using the same introduction to my speech as I have published in the defence, I replied to them severally. It is surprising with what attention, what clamorous applause I was heard, even by those who just before were loudest against me: such a wonderful change was wrought either by the importance of the affair, the successful progress of the speech, or the resolution of the advocate. After I had finished, Vejento attempted to reply; but the general clamour raised against him not permitting him to go on, 'I entreat you, conscript fathers,'† said he, 'not to oblige me to implore the assistance of the tribunes.'‡ Immediately the tribune Murena cried out, 'You have my permission, most illustrious Vejento, to go on.' But still the clamour was renewed. In the interval, the consul ordered the house to divide, and having counted the voices, dismissed the senate, leaving Vejento in the midst, still attempting to speak. He made great complaints of this affront (as

* In the early times of the republic they began by asking the opinion of the prince of the senate, and the rest went on each according to his age. Under the emperors, their will served as a rule: for as the prince presided in the senate, he demanded the opinion of him first whom he thought fit to do that honour: however, he more usually began with the consuls. *M.*

† The appellation by which the senate was addressed. *M.*

‡ The tribunes were magistrates chosen at first out of the body of the commons, for the defence of their liberties, and to interpose in all grievances offered by their superiors. Their authority extended even to the deliberations of the senate. *M.*

he called it), applying the following lines of Homer to himself:

> 'Great perils, father, wait the unequal fight;
> Those younger champions will thy strength o'ercome.' *

There was hardly a man in the senate that did not embrace and kiss me, and all strove who should applaud me most, for having, at the cost of private enmities, revived a custom so long disused, of freely consulting the senate upon affairs that concern the honour of the public; in a word, for having wiped off that reproach which was thrown upon it by other orders in the state, 'that the senators mutually favoured the members of their own body, while they were very severe in animadverting upon the rest of their fellow-citizens.' All this was transacted in the absence of Certus; who kept out of the way either because he suspected something of this nature was intended to be moved, or (as was alleged in his excuse) that he was really unwell. Caesar, however, did not refer the examination of this matter to the senate. But I succeeded, nevertheless, in my aim, another person being appointed to succeed Certus in the consulship, while the election of his colleague to that office was confirmed. And thus, the wish with which I concluded my speech, was actually accomplished: 'May he be obliged,' said I, 'to renounce, under a virtuous prince,† that reward he received from an infamous one!'‡ Some time after I recollected, as well as I could, the speech I had made upon this occasion; to which I made several additions. It happened (though indeed it had the appearance of being something more than casual) that a few days after I had published this piece, Certus was taken ill and died. I was told that his imagination was continually haunted with this affair, and kept picturing me ever before his eyes, as a man pursuing him with a drawn sword. Whether there was any truth in this rumour, I will not venture to assert; but, for the sake of example, however,

* Diomed's speech to Nestor, advising him to retire from the field of battle. Iliad, viii. 102. Pope. *M.*

† Nerva.

‡ Domitian; by whom he had been appointed consul elect, though he had not yet entered upon that office. *M.*

I could wish it might gain credit. And now I have sent you a letter which (considering it is a letter) is as long as the defence you say you have read: but you must thank yourself for not being content with such information as that piece could afford you. Farewell.

LETTER XIV. *To* TACITUS.

Though you are by no means inclined to self-admiration, yet, be assured, none of my writings are more sincerely the undissembled dictates of my real thoughts than those of which you are the subject. Whether, indeed, posterity will concern herself with either of us, I know not; but surely we deserve some small regard at least, I will not say upon account of our talents (that would be too vain a presumption), but from our application, our labours, and that high reverence we feel for her. Proceed we then, my friend, in the course we have entered upon, which, while it has conducted a few to the highest eminences of fame, has drawn forth many out of silent obscurity into public notice. Farewell.

LETTER XV. *To* FALCO.

I had taken refuge in my villa at Tuscum, in hopes of passing my time here, at least in my own way: but that is a privilege, I find, I am not to enjoy even here; so greatly am I interrupted with the troublesome complaints and petitions of my tenants, whose accounts I look over with more reluctance than I do my own; for really it is with great unwillingness I examine even these. I am revising, however, some little speeches; an employment which, after a length of time has intervened, is but of a very cold and unentertaining kind. Meanwhile, my domestic affairs are neglected as much as if I were away. Yet I sometimes so far act the part of careful master of the family as to mount my horse and ride about my farms, instead of taking my exercise in the *gestatio*.* As for you, I hope you will keep

* See p. 3, note *

up your old custom, and, in return for this account of my country doings, let me know what is going forward in town. Farewell.

LETTER XVI. *To* Mamilianus.

It is no wonder the chase you mention afforded you infinite pleasure, since 'the number of the slain (to use your own historical expression*) was not to be counted.' As for myself, I have neither leisure nor inclination for sports of that kind; nor leisure, because I am in the midst of my vintage; nor inclination, because it has proved a very poor one this season. However, I shall be able, I hope, to *draw off* some new verses, at least, if not new wine, for your entertainment, which (since you ask for them so pleasantly) I will not fail to send you, so soon as they shall be thoroughly *settled*. Farewell.

LETTER XVII. *To* Genitor.

I have received your letter, in which you complain of having been highly disgusted lately at a very splendid entertainment, by a set of buffoons, mummers, and wanton prostitutes, who were dancing about round the tables.† But

* An expression frequent among the historians in their descriptions of battles. *M.*

† These persons were introduced at most of the tables of the great, for the purposes of mirth and gaiety, and constituted an essential part in all polite entertainments among the Romans. It is surprising how soon this great people fell of from their original severity of manners, and were tainted with the stale refinements of foreign luxury. Livy dates the rise of this and other unmanly delicacies from the conquest of Scipio Asiaticus over Antiochus; that is, when the Roman name had scarce subsisted above a hundred and threescore years. '*Luxuriae peregrinae origo*,' says he, '*exercitu Asiatico in urbem invecta est*.'[1] This triumphant army caught, it seems, the contagious softness of the people it subdued; and, on its return to Rome, spread an infection among their countrymen, which worked by slow degrees, till it effected their total destruction. Thus did Eastern luxury revenge itself on Roman arms

[1] Liv. l. xxxix. c. 6.

let me advise you to smooth your knitted brow somewhat. I confess, indeed, I admit nothing of this kind at my own house; however, I bear with it in others. 'And why then,' you will be ready to ask, 'not have them yourself?' The truth is, because the gestures of the wanton, the pleasantries of the buffoon, or the extravagancies of the mummer, give me no pleasure, as they give me no surprise. It is my particular taste, you see, not my judgment, that I plead against them. And indeed, what numbers are there who think the entertainments with which you and I are most delighted no better than impertinent follies! How many are there who, as soon as a reader, a lyrist, or a comedian is introduced, either take their leave of the company or, if they remain, show as much dislike to this sort of thing as you did to those *monsters*, as you call them! Let us bear therefore, my friend, with others in their amusements, that they, in return, may show indulgence to ours. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII. *To* SABINUS.

With what care and attention you have read my works, and how perfectly you treasure them in your memory, your

It may be wondered that Pliny should keep his own temper, and check the indignation of his friends at a scene which was fit only for the dissolute revels of the infamous Trimalchio. But it will not, perhaps, be doing justice to our author to take an estimate of his real sentiments upon this point from the letter before us. Genitor, it seems, was a man of strict, but rather of too austere morals for the free turn of the age: '*emendatus et gravis: paulo etiam horridior et durior ut in hac licentia temporum*' (Ep. iii. l. 3). But as there is a certain seasonable accommodation to the manners of the times, not only extremely consistent with, but highly conducive to, the interests of virtue, Pliny, probably, may affect a greater latitude than he in general approved, in order to draw off his friend from that stiffness and unyielding disposition which might prejudice those of a gayer turn against him, and consequently lessen the beneficial influence of his virtues upon the world. A late most ingenious author, who has greatly distinguished himself in several branches of useful and polite literature, has given us a representation of one of these buffoons, from an antique in his collection: to which the reader is referred for a stronger idea of the vitiated and low taste of those who could receive from them any entertainment. See Middleton, Antiq. tab. 9, fig. 2. *M.*

letter is a sufficient proof. Do you reflect, then, what a trouble you are bringing upon your hands when you kindly entice me, by every friendly artifice, to communicate to you as many of them as possible? I cannot, certainly, refuse your request; but shall comply with it, however, at different intervals, and observe some kind of succession. For I would not, by too copious and too frequent a supply, overload and confuse a memory to which I already owe so many acknowledgments; nor, in short, pour in such profusion at once as to oblige it to obliterate what it had before retained, in order to make room for what succeeds. Farewell.

LETTER XIX. *To* Ruffo.

You have read, it seems, in a letter * of mine that Verginius Rufus directed the following lines to be inscribed upon his tomb:

> 'Here Rufus lies, who Vindex' arms withstood,
> Not for himself, but for his country's good:'

for which you blame him, and think Frontinus acted much more reasonably, in forbidding any monument whatsoever to be erected to his memory. And in the conclusion of your letter you desire my opinion upon each. I loved them both; but I confess I admired *him* most whom you condemn: and admired him to such a degree that, so far from imagining I ever should have occasion to become his advocate, I thought he could never be sufficiently praised. In my opinion, every man who has done anything great and memorable deserves not only excuse, but high approval, if he endeavours to secure immortality to the fame he has merited, and is desirous also to perpetuate an everlasting remembrance of himself by monumental inscriptions. Yet rarely shall you find a man, who had performed such great achievements, so modestly reserved upon the subject of his own actions as Verginius was. I can bear him witness (and I had the happiness to enjoy his intimate friendship) that I never but once heard him mention

* To Albinus; see book vi. letter x.

his own conduct; and that was, in giving an account of a conversation which passed between him and Cluvius 'You well know, Verginius,' (said Cluvius to him) 'the fidelity required in an historian; you will pardon me therefore, I hope, if you should meet with anything in my works that is not agreeable to you.' 'O Cluvius,' he replied, 'can you be ignorant that what I performed was in order that every man might enjoy the liberty of writing what he pleased?' But let us compare Frontinus with him in that very instance, in which you think the former more modest and reserved. He forbade the erection of a monument to him, it is true; but in what words? 'The expense of a monument is superfluous; the remembrance of me will remain, if my actions deserve it.' Is there more modesty, do you think, in thus proclaiming to all the world* that his memory would remain, than in marking upon a single tomb-stone, in two lines, the actions one has performed? It is not, however, my design to condemn your favourite hero; I only mean to defend Verginius: and what argument can have juster weight with you than one drawn from a comparison between him and the person you prefer? In my own opinion, indeed, neither of them deserves to be condemned, since they both were animated with the same ardent passion for glory, although they pursued their object by different roads: the former, in desiring to receive those monumental honours he had merited; the latter, in preferring to appear to despise them. Farewell.

LETTER XX. *To* VENATOR.

The longer your letter was, so much the more agreeable I thought it; especially as it was entirely upon the subject of my works. I am not at all surprised at your finding a pleasure in them, since I know you have the same affection for everything that belongs to me as you have for myself.

The getting in of my vintage (which, though it has

* It appears from hence that this was not a testamentary direction but a declaration in some work which Frontinus had published. *M.*

proved but a slender one this season, is, however, more plentiful than I expected) particularly employs me at present, if getting it in means gathering a grape now and then, visiting the wine-press, tasting the must in the vat, and sauntering up to my servants;* who, being all engaged out of doors, have wholly abandoned me to my readers and my secretaries. Farewell.

LETTER XXI. *To* Sabinianus.

Your freedman, whom you lately mentioned to me with displeasure, has been with me, and threw himself at my feet with as much submission as he could have fallen at yours. He earnestly requested me with many tears, and even with all the eloquence of silent sorrow, to intercede for him; in short, he convinced me by his whole behaviour that he sincerely repents of his fault. I am persuaded he is thoroughly reformed, because he seems deeply sensible of his guilt. I know you are angry with him, and I know, too, it is not without reason; but clemency can never exert itself more laudably than when there is the most cause for resentment. You once had an affection for this man, and, I hope, will have again: meanwhile, let me only prevail with you to pardon him. If he should incur your displeasure hereafter, you will have so much the stronger plea in excuse for your anger as you show yourself more merciful to him now. Concede something to his youth, to his tears, and to your own natural mildness of temper: do not make him uneasy any longer, and I will add too, do not make yourself so; for a man of your kindness of heart cannot be angry without feeling great uneasiness. I am afraid, were I to join my entreaties with his, I should seem rather to compel than request you to forgive him. Yet I will not scruple even to write mine with his; and in so much the stronger terms as I have very sharply and severely reproved him, positively threatening never to interpose again in his behalf. But

* The distinction in the civil law between the *servi urbani et rustici* is alluded to in the original; but as we have not the same among us, it is not possible, perhaps, to preserve this allusion, with propriety, in an English translation. *M.*

though it was proper to say this to him, in order to make him more fearful of offending, I do not say so to you. I may, perhaps, again have occasion to entreat you upon his account, and again obtain your forgiveness; supposing, I mean, his fault should be such as may become me to intercede for, and you to pardon. Farewell.

LETTER XXII. *To* SEVERUS.

I have been much alarmed by the ill-health of Passienus Paulus, and indeed I had plenty of just cause for my uneasiness. He is a thoroughly good excellent fellow, and one of my most affectionate friends. In his writings he very successfully emulates the ancients, whose spirit and manner he has closely imitated, and happily restored; especially that of Propertius, to whom he is no less allied by genius than by blood, as he particularly resembles that poet in his chief excellency. When you read his elegies, you will perceive an elegance, a tenderness, and a gaiety, peculiar to the family of Propertius. He has lately made some attempts in the lyric way, in which he as successfully copies the manner of Horace as he has that of the other poet just mentioned. You would imagine, were there such a thing as a kindred in genius, that the blood of Horace likewise flowed in his veins. He displays so much variety and versatility, appears the tenderest and truest lover, the most passionate mourner, the kindest panegyrist, and the most genial humorist; in short, whatever kind of poetry he engages in, he executes with so masterly a hand that one would imagine it were the single species to which he had applied himself. The illness of such a friend and such a genius occasioned as much anxiety to me as it did pain to him. But at length *he* is recovered, and *my* peace restored: so congratulate me, congratulate literature itself, which ran as great a risk by his danger as it will receive glory by his recovery. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII. *To* MAXIMUS.

It has frequently happened, as I have been pleading before the Court of the Hundred, that those venerable

judges, after having preserved for a long period the gravity and solemnity suitable to their character, have suddenly, as though urged by irresistible impulse, risen up to a man and applauded me. I have often likewise gained as much glory in the senate as my utmost wishes could desire: but I never felt a more sensible pleasure than by an account which I lately received from Cornelius Tacitus. He informed me that, at the last Circensian games, he sat next to a Roman knight, who, after conversation had passed between them upon various points of learning, asked him, 'Are you an Italian, or a provincial?' Tacitus replied, 'Your acquaintance with literature must surely have informed you who I am.' 'Pray, then, is it Tacitus or Pliny I am talking with?' I cannot express how highly I am pleased to find that our names are not so much the proper appellatives of men as a kind of distinction for learning herself; and that eloquence renders us known to those who would otherwise be ignorant of us. An accident of the same kind happened to me a few days ago. Fabius Rufinus, a person of distinguished merit, was placed next to me at table; and below him a countryman of his, who had just then come to Rome for the first time. Rufinus, calling his friend's attention to me, said to him, 'You see this man?' and entered into a conversation upon the subject of my pursuits: to whom the other immediately replied, 'This must undoubtedly be Pliny.' To confess the truth, I look upon these instances as a very considerable recompense of my labours. If Demosthenes had reason to be pleased with the old woman of Athens crying out, 'This is Demosthenes!' * may not I, then, be allowed to congratulate myself upon the celebrity my name has ac-

* The story, as related by Cicero, is as follows. Demosthenes met an old woman carrying a pail of water, upon which she whispers to her companion, 'This is Demosthenes!' I must not, however, conceal from the reader that Cicero condemns the Grecian orator for being pleased upon this occasion, and accounts for it in the true spirit of philosophy, '*apud alios loqui videlicet didicerat, non multum ipse secum:*'[1] he had learnt the art of talking to others, but was unacquainted, it seems, with the most instructive of all arts, the art of *self-converse:* a little of this home-philosophy would have taught him, in the judgment of Cicero, to rate vulgar admiration at a lower value. *M.*

[1] Tusc. l. v.

quired? Yes, my friend, I will rejoice in it, and without scruple admit that I do. As I only mention the judgment of others, not my own, I am not afraid of incurring the censure of vanity; especially from you, who, whilst envying no man's reputation, are particularly zealous for mine. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV. *To* SABINIANUS.

I greatly approve of your having, in compliance with my letter,* received again into your favour and family a discarded freedman, whom you once admitted into a share of your affection. This will afford you, I doubt not, great satisfaction. It certainly has me, both as a proof that your passion can be controlled, and as an instance of your paying so much regard to me, as either to yield to my authority or to comply with my request. Let me, therefore, at once both praise and thank you. At the same time I must advise you to be disposed for the future to pardon the faults of your people, though there should be none to intercede in their behalf. Farewell.

LETTER XXV. *To* MAMILIANUS.

Though you complain of the crowd of military business which presses upon you, yet, as if you were enjoying the most uninterrupted leisure, you read and admire, it seems, my poetical trifles, and not a little encourage me still to persevere in this sort of thing. I begin, indeed, to pursue this kind of study, not only with a view to my diversion, but my reputation, since they have approved themselves to the judgment of a man of your dignity and learning, and, what is more, of your sincerity. At present I have some law-court business on hand, which takes up a little of my time; but as soon as I shall have dispatched this, I will again trust my muse to your candid bosom. You will suffer my little doves and sparrows to take wing among

* See letter xxi. of this book. *M.*

your eagles,* if you should have the same good opinion of them as they have of themselves; if not, you will kindly confine them to their cages or their nests. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI. *To* Lupercus.

I said once (and, I think, not inaptly) of a certain orator of the present age, whose compositions are extremely regular and correct, but deficient in grandeur and embellishment, 'His only fault is that he has none.' Whereas he, who is possessed of the true spirit of oratory, should be bold and elevated, and sometimes even flame out, be hurried away, and frequently tread upon the brink of a precipice: for danger is generally near whatever is towering and exalted. The plain, it is true, affords a safer, but for that reason a more humble and inglorious, path: they who run are more likely to stumble than they who creep; but the latter gain no honour by not slipping, while the former even fall with glory. It is with eloquence as with some other arts; she is never more pleasing than when she risks most. Have you not observed what acclamations our rope dancers excite at the instant of imminent danger? Whatever is most entirely unexpected, or, as the Greeks more strongly express it, whatever is most *perilous*, most excites our admiration. The pilot's skill is by no means equally proved in a calm as in a storm: in the former case he tamely enters the port, unnoticed and unapplauded; but when the cordage cracks, the mast bends, and the rudder groans, then is it that he shines out in all his glory, and is hailed as little inferior to a sea-god. The reason of my making this observation is, because, if I mistake not, you have marked some passages in my writings for being tumid, exuberant, and over-wrought, which, in my estimation, are but adequate to the thought, or boldly sublime. But it is material to consider whether your criticism turns upon such points as are real faults, or only striking and remarkable expressions. Whatever is elevated is sure to be observed; but it requires a very nice judgment to distinguish the bounds between true and false

* Alluding to the Roman standard, which was an eagle fixed upon the top of a spear. *M.*

grandeur; between loftiness and exaggeration. To give an instance out of Homer, the author who can, with the greatest propriety, fly from one extreme of style to another

> 'Heav'n in loud thunder bids the trumpet sound;
> And wide beneath them groans the rending ground.' *

Again,

> 'Reclin'd on clouds his steed and armour lay.' †

So in this passage:

> 'As torrents roll, increas'd by numerous rills,
> With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
> Rush to the vales, and pour'd along the plain,
> Roar through a thousand channels to the main.'

It requires, I say, the nicest balance to poise these metaphors, and determine whether they are incredible and meaningless, or majestic and sublime. Not that I think anything which I have written, or can write, admits of comparison with these. I am not quite so foolish: but what I would be understood to contend for is, that we should give eloquence free rein, and not restrain the force and impetuosity of genius within too narrow a compass. But it will be said, perhaps, that one law applies to orators, another to poets. As if, in truth, Marc Tully were not as bold in his metaphors as any of the poets! But not to mention particular instances from him, in a point where, I imagine, there can be no dispute; does Demosthenes § himself, that model and standard of true oratory, does Demosthenes check and repress the fire of his indignation, in that well-known passage which begins thus: 'These

* Iliad, xxi. 387. Pope. *M.*

† Iliad, v. 356, speaking of Mars. *M.*

‡ Iliad, iv. 452. Pope.

§ The design of Pliny in this letter is to justify the figurative expressions he had employed, probably in some oration, by instances of the same warmth of colouring from those great masters of eloquence, Demosthenes and his rival Aeschines. But the force of the passages which he produces from these orators must necessarily be greatly weakened to a mere modern reader, some of them being only hinted at, as generally well known; and the metaphors in several of the others have either lost much of their original spirit and boldness, by being introduced and received in common language, or cannot, perhaps, be preserved in an English translation. *M.*

wicked men, these flatterers, and these destroyers of mankind,' &c. And again: 'It is neither with stones nor bricks that I have fortified this city,' &c.—And afterwards: 'I have *thrown* up these *out-works* before Attica, and pointed out to you all the resources which human prudence can suggest,' &c.—And in another place: 'O Athenians, I swear by the immortal gods that he is *intoxicated* with the grandeur of his own actions,' &c.*—But what can be more daring and beautiful than that long digression, which begins in this manner: 'A terrible disease'?—The following passage likewise, though somewhat shorter, is equally boldly conceived:—'Then it was I rose up in opposition to the daring Pytho, who *poured forth a torrent* of menaces against you,' &c.†—The subsequent stricture is of the same stamp: 'When a man has strengthened himself, as Philip has, in avarice and wickedness, the first pretence, the first false step, be it ever so inconsiderable, has overthrown and destroyed all,' &c.‡—So in the same style with the foregoing is this:—'*Railed off*, as it were, from the privileges of society, by the concurrent and just judgments of the three tribunals in the city.'—And in the same place: 'O Aristogiton! you have *betrayed* that mercy which used to be shown to offences of this nature, or rather, indeed, you have wholly destroyed it. In vain then would you fly for refuge to a *port*, which you have *shut up*, and encompassed with rocks.'—He has said before: 'I am afraid, therefore, you should appear in the judgment of some, to have *erected a public seminary* of faction: for there is a weakness in all wickedness, which renders it apt to betray itself!'—And a little lower: 'I see none of these resources open to him; but all is *precipice*, *gulf*, and *profound abyss*.'—And again: 'Nor do I imagine that our ancestors erected those courts of judicature that men of his character should be *planted* there; but on the contrary, *eradicated*, that none may emulate their evil actions.'—And afterwards: 'If he is then the *artificer* of every wickedness, if he only makes it his *trade and traffic*,' &c.—And a thousand other passages which I

* See 1st Philippic.
† See Demosthenes' speech in defence of Ctesiphon.
‡ See 2nd Olynthiac.

might cite to the same purpose; not to mention those expressions which Aeschines calls not words, but *wonders*.—You will tell me, perhaps, I have unwarily mentioned Aeschines, since Demosthenes is condemned even by him, for running into these figurative expressions. But observe, I entreat you, how far superior the former orator is to his critic, and superior too in the very passages to which he objects; for in others, the force of his genius, in those above quoted, its loftiness, makes itself manifest. But does Aeschines himself avoid those errors which he reproves in Demosthenes? 'The orator,' says he, 'Athenians, and the law, ought to *speak* the same language; but when the *voice* of the law declares one thing, and that of the orator another, we should give our vote to the justice of the law, not to the impudence of the orator.' *—And in another place: 'He afterwards manifestly discovered the design he had, of concealing his fraud under cover of the decree, having expressly declared therein that the ambassadors sent to the Oretae gave the five talents, not to you, but to Callias. And that you may be convinced of the truth of what I say (after having *stripped* the decree of its *gallies*, its trim, and its arrogant ostentation), read the clause itself.'—And in another part: 'Suffer him not to *break cover* and *escape* out of the limits of the question.' A metaphor he is so fond of that he repeats it again. 'But remaining firm and confident in the assembly, *drive* him into the merits of the question, and observe well how he *doubles*.'—Is his style more reserved and simple when he says: 'But you are for ever *wounding* our ears, and are more concerned in the success of your daily harangues than for the salvation of the city?'—What follows is conceived in a yet higher strain of metaphor: 'Will you not expel this man as the common calamity of Greece? Will you not seize and punish this *pirate* of the state, who *sails* about in quest of favourable conjunctures,' &c.—With many other passages of a similar nature. And now I expect you will make the same attacks upon certain expressions in this letter as you did upon those I have been endeavouring to defend. The rudder that *groans*, and the pilot compared

* See Aeschines' speech against Ctesiphon.

to a *sea-god*, will not, I imagine, escape your criticism: for I perceive, while I am suing for indulgence to my former style, I have fallen into the same kind of figurative diction which you condemn. But attack them if you please, provided you will immediately appoint a day when we may meet to discuss these matters in person: you will then either teach *me* to be less daring or I shall teach *you* to be more bold. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII. *To* Lateranus.

I have had many occasions to observe the power, the dignity, the majesty, and, I will add, too, even the *divine* efficacy there is in history, but especially lately. An author had been reciting part of a historical piece drawn up with the utmost regard to truth, and had reserved the remainder for another day. When, lo and behold! the friends of a certain person came begging and beseeching him not to recite the rest: they were so ashamed to hear read out what they had done, although they were not ashamed to do what they blushed to hear repeated. The historian complied with their request, as he honourably might. However, both the history and the action still remain, and will always remain and be read. And read too so much the more because the publication of it is delayed: for nothing excites people's curiosity so much as to delay its gratification. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII. *To* Romanus.

Your letters have at length reached me, and I received three at once; all most elegantly written, all most affectionate ones; in short, such as I had reason to expect from you, especially after having wished for them so long. In one, you enjoin me the very agreeable commission of forwarding your letter to that excellent lady, the virtuous Plotina;* I will take care to do so. In the same letter

* Plotina was consort to the emperor Trajan. Her virtues are celebrated by several historians, and our author draws a most amiable

you recommend to me Popilius Artemisius; and accordingly I immediately granted his request. You tell me too you have had but a moderate grape harvest. That complaint, notwithstanding we are each in such a very different part of the world, is common to us both. Your second letter informs me that you are employed in alternately dictating and writing upon subjects which recall me to you. I am much obliged, and should be more so if you would allow me to read your performances. And it is only fair that, as I let you see all my compositions, you should allow me to see yours, even though they should be upon subjects which concern others. You promise me, at the end of your letter, that as soon as you shall hear with more certainty how I intend disposing of myself, you will make an elopement from your family forthwith, and fly over to me: I am already preparing certain chains for you, which, when I have you here, you will by no means be able to break through. I learn from your third that my speech in behalf of Clarius has been delivered to you, and that it sounds fuller than when you heard it originally pronounced. It *is* fuller, for I afterwards enlarged it considerably. You further mention having sent me another letter, which you say was written with peculiar care, and desire to know if I have received it: I have not, but am impatiently awaiting its arrival. Meanwhile, write to me upon the very first opportunity, and pay me with full interest for this delay; which I shall compute at the rate of twelve per cent.: for can I now let you off upon cheaper terms? Farewell.

character of her in few words, in his noble[1] panegyric upon that prince. He represents her (and he could not give a higher idea of her) as meriting the choice of that excellent emperor; of a sanctity of manners worthy of ancient Rome; plain in her attire, modest in her equipage, and polite in her address. She greatly contributed, it is said,[2] to the wise choice which Trajan made of a successor; and Adrian, in gratitude for her good offices to him in that election, dedicated a magnificent temple to her memory, at Nismes in Languedoc: the remains of which are still to be seen.[3] *M.*

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[1] Plin. Paneg. No. 83. [2] Eutrop. l. viii. c. 6.
[3] Montfauc. Diar. p. 4.

LETTER XXIX. *To* Rusticus.

As it is better to excel in any single art than to arrive only at mediocrity in several, so a moderate skill in several is to be preferred where one cannot attain to perfection in any. Upon this principle it is that I have attempted compositions of various sorts, as I could not expect to carry any particular one to its highest point of perfection. I hope, therefore, when you read any production of mine, you will consider it with that indulgence which is due to an author who has not confined himself to a single subject, but has struck out into different branches of composition. In every other sort of workmanship the number pleads some excuse for the deficiencies of the artist; and shall works of literature, the most difficult of all others, be tried by a severer law? But whilst I am bespeaking your candour, am I not bringing my gratitude in question? For, if you receive these last pieces with the same indulgence that you have all my former, I have more reasons to hope for your praise than to sue for your pardon: your pardon, however, will be sufficient. Farewell.

LETTER XXX. *To* Geminius.

You have frequently in conversation, and lately in a letter, commended your friend Nonius to me for his great liberality to particular persons: I shall join with you in his applause, provided his bounty be not confined to those only you mention. I would have the man who desires to show himself influenced by a spirit of true generosity liberal to his country, his kindred, his relations, and his friends; his friends, I mean, in distress: not like those who chiefly bestow their presents where there is the greatest ability to make returns. I do not look upon such men as parting with anything of their own; on the contrary, I consider their bounties as only so many disguised baits thrown out with a design of catching the property of others. Much of the same character are those who defraud one man in order to be generous to another, and aim at a reputation for munificence by sordid means. To be content with our

own is the first point, and after that, to cherish and embrace all the most indigent of every kind in one comprehensive circle of general benevolence. If your friend observes this rule in its full extent, he is entirely to be commended; if he only partially pursues it, still he deserves (in a less degree indeed, however, he deserves) praise: so uncommon is it to meet with an instance of generosity even of the most imperfect kind! The lust of avarice has so laid hold of mankind that their wealth seems rather to possess them than they to possess their wealth. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI. *To* SARDUS.

I still continued to enjoy your company, even after we had parted. I read your book, frequently repeating, with especial fondness (I honestly confess it), those passages of which I am the subject: a subject upon which, indeed, you have been extremely diffuse. With what variety of expression, and in how many different ways have you said the same things about the same person? Will you allow me to join my praises with my thanks? I can do neither sufficiently; and if I could, there would be somewhat, I fear, of vanity in making that the subject of my praise which is, in truth, the object of my thanks. I will only add, then, that I thought your compliments to me raised the merit of your performance; as the merit of your performance heightened the pleasure of your compliments. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII. *To* TITIANUS.

What are you doing? And what do you propose to do? As for myself, I pass my life in the pleasantest, that is, in the most do-nothing, manner imaginable. I do not find myself therefore in the humour to write a long letter, though I am to read one. I am too much of a voluptuary for the former, and just idle enough for the latter: for none are more indolent, you know, than your fine gentlemen, or have more curiosity than those who have nothing to do. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII. *To* Caninius.

I have met with a story,* which, although authenticated by undoubted evidence, looks very like fable, and would afford a worthy field for the exercise of so exuberant, lofty, and truly poetical a genius as your own. It was related to me the other day over the dinner table, where the conversation happened to run upon various kinds of marvels. The person who told the story was a man of unsuspected veracity:—but what has a poet to do with truth? However, you might venture to rely upon his testimony, even though you had the character of a faithful historian to support. There is in Africa a town called Hippo, situated not far from the sea-coast: it stands upon a navigable lake, communicating with an estuary in the form of a river, which alternately flows into the lake, or into the ocean, according to the ebb and flow of the tide. People of all ages amuse themselves here with fishing, sailing, or swimming; especially boys, whom love of play brings to the spot. With these it is a fine and manly achievement to be able to swim the farthest; and he that leaves the shore and his companions at the greatest distance gains the victory. It happened, in one of these trials of skill, that a certain boy, bolder than the rest, launched out towards the opposite shore. He was met by a dolphin,† who sometimes swam before him, and sometimes behind him, then played round him, and at last took him upon his back, and set him down, and afterwards took him up again; and thus he carried the poor frightened fellow out into the deepest part; when immediately he turns back again to the shore, and lands him amongst his companions. The fame of this remarkable accident spread through the town, and crowds of people flocked round the boy (whom they viewed as a kind of prodigy) to ask him questions and hear him relate the story. The next day the shore

* Related also by the elder Pliny. See N. H. ix. 8. *M.*

† This animal is celebrated by several of the ancients for its philanthropy, and Pliny the elder, in particular, relates this very story, among other instances, in confirmation of that notion. See Plin. Hist. Nat. l. ix. c. 8. *M.*

was thronged with spectators, all attentively watching the ocean, and (what indeed is almost itself an ocean) the lake. Meanwhile the boys swam as usual, and among the rest, the boy I am speaking of went into the lake, but with more caution than before. The dolphin appeared again and came to the boy, who, together with his companions, swam away with the utmost precipitation. The dolphin, as though to invite and call them back, leaped and dived up and down, in a series of circular movements. This he practised the next day, the day after, and for several days together, till the people (accustomed from their infancy to the sea) began to be ashamed of their timidity. They ventured, therefore, to advance nearer, playing with him and calling him to them, while he, in return, suffered himself to be touched and stroked. Use rendered them courageous. The boy, in particular, who first made the experiment, swam by the side of him, and, leaping upon his back, was carried backwards and forwards in that manner, and thought the dolphin knew him and was fond of him, while he too had grown fond of the dolphin. There seemed, now, indeed, to be no fear on either side, the confidence of the one and tameness of the other mutually increasing; the rest of the boys, in the meanwhile, surrounding and encouraging their companion. It is very remarkable that this dolphin was followed by a second, which seemed only as a spectator and attendant on the former; for he did not at all submit to the same familiarities as the first, but only escorted him backwards and forwards, as the boys did their comrade. But what is further surprising, and no less true than what I have already related, is that this dolphin, who thus played with the boys and carried them upon his back, would come upon the shore, dry himself in the sand, and, as soon as he grew warm, roll back into the sea. It is a fact that Octavius Avitus, deputy governor of the province, actuated by an absurd piece of superstition, poured some ointment * over him as he lay on the shore: the novelty and

* It was a religious ceremony practised by the ancients to pour precious ointments upon the statues of their gods: Avitus, it is probable, imagined this dolphin was some sea-divinity, and therefore expressed his veneration of him by the solemnity of a sacred unction. *M.*

smell of which made him retire into the ocean, and it was not till several days after that he was seen again, when he appeared dull and languid; however, he recovered his strength, and continued his usual playful tricks. All the magistrates round flocked hither to view this sight, whose arrival, and prolonged stay, was an additional expense, which the slender finances of this little community would ill afford; besides, the quiet and retirement of the place was utterly destroyed. It was thought proper, therefore, to remove the occasion of this concourse, by privately killing the poor dolphin. And now, with what a flow of tenderness will you describe this affecting catastrophe!* and how will your genius adorn and heighten this moving story! Though, indeed, the subject does not require any fictitious embellishments; it will be sufficient to describe the actual facts of the case without suppression or diminution. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV. *To* Tranquillus.

Help me out of my difficulty. I am not, I am told, a good reader, of poetry at least: my talent lying chiefly in reciting speeches, I succeed so much the worse, it seems, in poetry. I purpose, therefore, as I am going to recite

* The overflowing humanity of Pliny's temper breaks out upon all occasions, but he discovers it in nothing more strongly than by the impression which this little story appears to have made upon him. True benevolence, indeed, extends itself through the whole compass of existence, and sympathises with the distress of every creature of sensation. Little minds may be apt to consider a compassion of this inferior kind as an instance of weakness; but it is undoubtedly the evidence of a noble nature. Homer thought it not unbecoming the character even of a hero to melt into tears at a distress of this sort, and has given us a most amiable and affecting picture of Ulysses weeping over his faithful dog Argus, when he expires at his feet:

> . . . . αυταρ ο νοσφιν ιδων απομορξατο δακρυ,
> Ρεια λαθων Ευμαιον. . . . .
>
> 'Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul;
> Adown his cheek the tear unbidden stole,
> Stole unperceived; he turn'd his head and dry'd
> The drop humane.' . . . .
>
> Odyss. xvii. (Pope.) *M.*

some poems to my particular friends, to make use of my freedman for that purpose. It is an instance, I own, of my treating them with little ceremony, that I assign this business to a person who is not himself very expert in it. However, he will perform, I am sure, better than I can, provided he does not get confused; for he is as unpractised a reader as I am a poet. Now the question is, how shall I behave while he is reading; whether I shall sit still and silent, like a mere idle spectator, or follow him as he pronounces, with my looks, hands, and a low tone of applause, like a certain person you know. But I am afraid I can beat time * no better than I can read. I repeat again, then, you must help me out of my difficulty, and write back and tell me truly whether you think it more excusable to read very badly than to do or omit any of the things above-mentioned. Farewell.

LETTER XXXV. *To* APPIUS.

I have received your book which you sent me, and return you thanks for it, but am so exceedingly busy just now

* In the original it is called *saltatio*, which means a motion of the hands accommodated either to one's own or another's elocution. Our language does not supply a proper word for this gesture, as indeed we have too little occasion to find the want of it; the *chironomic* art, so much studied by the ancients, being in the number of those which have been long since lost. But if the *indoctae rusticaeve manus*,[1] the awkward and unmeaning disposition of the hands, would have spoiled the noblest speech at Rome or Athens that Tully or Demosthenes, in all the warmth of their enlivening eloquence, ever delivered, it would not, perhaps, be time ill employed if our modern orators would give a little more attention to the graceful management of those essential instruments of affecting elocution. This becoming art, so far as it was connected with masculine oratory, Pliny, most certainly, could not but be well skilled in: it is probable therefore, what he says in this place alludes to this *affected manner* which certain authors of his time had fallen into, when they attended the rehearsal of their own works; and that the whole turn of this epistle is ironical. This conjecture seems supported not only by the subject of the letter, which is scarce of importance enough to bear a serious enquiry, but also by the expression he sets out with, viz. *Explica* aestum *meum*, which seems to be of the ludicrous kind. *M.*

[1] Quintilian.

that I have not time to read it; which, however, I am impatiently desirous of doing. I have that high reverence for learning in general, and for your compositions in particular, that I think it a sort of profanation to take them up except with a mind entirely free and disengaged. I extremely approve of your care in revising your works; but, remember, correctness has its limits: over-care and nicety impairs rather than improves a performance, besides that, while obstructing other pursuits, it not only prevents any new attempts, but does not even finish what it has begun. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVI. *To* Fuscus.

You want to know how I portion out my day, in my summer villa at Tuscum? I get up just when I please; generally about sunrise, often earlier, but seldom later than this. I keep the shutters closed, as darkness and silence wonderfully promote meditation. Thus free and abstracted from those outward objects which dissipate attention, I am left to my own thoughts; nor suffer my mind to wander with my eyes, but keep my eyes in subjection to my mind, which, when they are not distracted by a multiplicity of external objects, see nothing but what the imagination represents to them. If I have any work in hand, this is the time I choose for thinking it out, word for word, even to the minutest accuracy of expression. In this way I compose more or less, according as the subject is more or less difficult, and I find myself able to retain it. I then call my secretary, and, opening the shutters, dictate to him what I have put into shape, after which I dismiss him, then call him in again, and again dismiss him. About ten or eleven o'clock (for I do not observe one fixed hour), according to the weather, I either walk upon my terrace or in the covered portico, and there I continue to meditate or dictate what remains upon the subject in which I am engaged. This completed, I get into my chariot, where I employ myself as before, when I was walking, or in my study; and find this change of scene refreshes and keeps up my attention. On my return home, I take a little nap, then a walk, and after that, repeat out loud and distinctly

some Greek or Latin speech, not so much for the sake of strengthening my voice as my digestion;* though indeed the voice at the same time is strengthened by this practice. I then take another walk, am anointed, do my exercises, and go into the bath. At supper, if I have only my wife or a few friends with me, some author is read to us; and after supper we are entertained either with music or an interlude. When that is finished, I take my walk with my family, among whom I am not without some scholars. Thus we pass our evenings in varied conversation; and the day, even when at the longest, steals imperceptibly away. Upon some occasions I change the order in certain of the articles above-mentioned. For instance, if I have studied longer or walked more than usual, after my second sleep, and reading a speech or two aloud, instead of using my chariot I get on horseback; by which means I ensure as much exercise and lose less time. The visits of my friends from the neighbouring villages claim some part of the day; and sometimes, by an agreeable interruption, they come in very seasonably to relieve me when I am feeling tired. I now and then amuse myself with hunting, but always take my tablets into the field, that, if I should meet with no game, I may at least bring home something.† Part of my time too (though not so much as they desire) is allotted to my tenants; whose rustic complaints, along with these city occupations, make my literary studies still more delightful to me. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVII. *To* PAULINUS.

As you are not of a disposition to expect from your friends the ordinary ceremonial observances of society when they cannot observe them without inconvenience to themselves, so I love you too steadfastly to be apprehen-

* By the regimen which Pliny here follows, one would imagine, if he had not told us who were his physicians, that the celebrated Celsus was in the number. That author expressly recommends reading aloud, and afterwards walking, as beneficial in disorders of the stomach: '*Si quis stomacho laborat, legere clare debet; post lectionem ambulare,*' &c. Celsi Medic. l. i. c. 8. *M.*

† See book i. letter vi. and the note there. *M*

sive of your taking otherwise than I wish you should my not waiting upon you on the first day of your entrance upon the consular office, especially as I am detained here by the necessity of letting my farms upon long leases. I am obliged to enter upon an entirely new plan with my tenants: for under the former leases, though I made them very considerable abatements, they have run greatly in arrear. For this reason several of them have not only taken no sort of care to lessen a debt which they found themselves incapable of wholly discharging, but have even seized and consumed all the produce of the land, in the belief that it would now be of no advantage to themselves to spare it. I must therefore obviate this increasing evil, and endeavour to find out some remedy against it. The only one I can think of is, not to reserve my rent in money, but in kind, and so place some of my servants to overlook the tillage, and guard the stock; as indeed there is no sort of revenue more agreeable to reason than what arises from the bounty of the soil, the seasons, and the climate. It is true, this method will require great honesty, sharp eyes, and many hands. However, I must risk the experiment, and, as in an inveterate complaint, try every change of remedy. You see, it is not any pleasurable indulgence that prevents my attending you on the first day of your consulship. I shall celebrate it, nevertheless, as much as if I were present, and pay my vows for you here, with all the warmest tokens of joy and congratulation. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVIII. *To* Saturninus.

Yes, I sincerely applaud your friend Rufus: not because you desire me, but because he fully deserves it. I have read his very finished performance; to which, though my affection for the author added a considerable recommendation, yet it did not blind my judgment; for the malicious critic is not, I hope, the only judicious reader. Farewell

LETTER XXXIX. *To* MUSTIUS.*

In compliance with the advice of the Aruspices,† I intend to enlarge and beautify the temple of Ceres, which stands upon my estate. It is indeed a very ancient fabric, and though extremely small, yet upon a certain stated anniversary is much frequented. On the 15th of September great numbers of people from all the country round assemble there, at which time many affairs are transacted, and many vows paid and offered; but there is no shelter at hand for them either from sun or rain. I think, therefere, I shall perform an act both of piety and munificence if, at the same time that I build a beautiful temple, I add to it a spacious portico; the first for the service of the goddess, the other for the use of the people. I beg therefore you would purchase for me four marble pillars, of whatever kind you shall think proper; as well as a quantity of marble for laying the floor, and encrusting the walls. You must also either buy a statue of the goddess or get one made; for age has maimed, in some parts, the ancient one of wood which stands there at present. With respect to the portico, I do not recollect there being anything you can send me that will be serviceable; unless you will sketch me out a plan suitable to the situation of the place. It is not practicable to build it round the temple, because it is encompassed on one side by the river, whose banks are exceedingly steep; and on the other, by the high-road. Beyond this road lies a very large meadow, in which the portico may be conveniently enough placed, opposite to the temple; unless you, who know so well how to conquer the inconveniencies of nature by art, can hit upon some better plan. Farewell.

* An architect, apparently.

† The business of the Aruspices was to examine the beasts which were offered in sacrifice, and from thence to foretell the success of any enterprise. *M.*

LETTER XL. *To* Fuscus.

You are much pleased, I find, with the account I gave you in my former letter* of how I spend the summer season at Tuscum, and desire to know what alteration I make in my method when I am at Laurentum in the winter. None at all, except abridging myself of my sleep at noon, and borrowing a good piece of the night before day-break and after sunset for study: and if business is very urgent (which in winter very frequently happens), instead of having interludes or music after supper, I reconsider whatever I have previously dictated, and improve my memory at the same time by this frequent mental revision. Thus I have given you a general sketch of my mode of life in summer and winter; to which you may add the intermediate seasons of spring and autumn, in which, while losing nothing out of the day, I gain but little from the night. Farewell.

* See letter xxxvi. of this book.

BOOK X.

LETTER I.* *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE pious affection you bore, most sacred Emperor, to your august father induced you to wish it might be late ere you succeeded him. But the immortal gods thought proper to hasten the advancement of those virtues to the helm of the commonwealth which had already shared in the steerage.† May *you* then, and the world through your means, enjoy every prosperity worthy of your reign: to which let me add my wishes, most excellent Emperor, upon a private

* The greater part of the following letters were written by Pliny during his administration in the province of Bithynia. They are of a style and character extremely different from those in the preceding collection; whence some critics have injudiciously inferred that they are the production of another hand: not considering that the occasion necessarily required a different *manner*. In letters of business, as these chiefly are, *turn* and *sentiment* would be foreign and impertinent; politeness and elegance of expression being the essentials that constitute perfection in this kind: and in that view, though they may be less entertaining, they have not less merit than the former. But besides their particular excellence as letters, they have a farther recommendation as so many valuable pieces of history, by throwing a strong light upon the character of one of the most amiable and glorious princes in the Roman annals. Trajan appears throughout in the most striking attitude that majesty can be placed in; in the exertion of power to the godlike purposes of justice and benevolence: and what one of the ancient historians has said of him is here clearly verified, that '*he rather chose to be loved than flattered by his people.*' To have been distinguished by the favour and friendship of a monarch of so exalted a character is an honour that reflects the brightest lustre upon our author; as to have been served and celebrated by a courtier of Pliny's genius and virtues is the noblest monument of glory that could have been raised to Trajan. *M.*

† Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, reigned but sixteen months and a few days. Before his death he not only adopted Trajan, and named him for his successor, but actually admitted him into a share of the government; giving him the titles of *Caesar*, *Germanicus*, and *Imperator*. Vid. Plin. Paneg. *M.*

as well as public account, that your health and spirits may be preserved firm and unbroken.

LETTER II. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

You have occasioned me, Sir,* an inexpressible pleasure in deeming me worthy of enjoying the privilege which the laws confer on those who have three children. For although it was from an indulgence to the request of the excellent Julius Servianus, your own most devoted servant, that you granted this favour, yet I have the satisfaction to find by the words of your rescript that you complied the more willingly as his application was in my behalf. I cannot but look upon myself as in possession of my utmost wish, after having thus received, at the beginning of your most auspicious reign, so distinguishing a mark of your peculiar favour; at the same time that it considerably heightens my desire of leaving a family behind me. I was not entirely without this desire even in the late most unhappy times:† as my two marriages will induce you to believe. But the gods decreed it better, by reserving every valuable privilege to the bounty of your generous dispensations. And indeed the pleasure of being a father will be so much more acceptable to me *now*, that I can enjoy it in full security and happiness.

* The translator has ventured to render the appellative *Dominus* by that of *Sir*, not because he is satisfied with the strict propriety of the title, but as thinking it less exceptionable than any other our language affords. That Pliny could not intend it as a title of royalty seems evident from several passages in his panegyric, where, whenever he uses it in that sense, he constantly includes in it a notion of tyranny. (Vid. Paneg. xlv. No. 4; lv. No. 7; lxxxv. No. 1.) Accordingly we find Augustus refusing the title of *Dominus*, as conveying an odious idea: '*Ut maledictum et opprobrium semper exhorruit*' (Suet. in Aug. c. 53). Besides, the high style of royalty would ill suit with that air of freedom and equality which so remarkably distinguishes these letters of Pliny to Trajan; and the graceful simplicity of the Roman consul's address would be lost in the servile forms of a modern courtier. But appears from a passage in Seneca that the Romans used the word *Dominus* as a general title of respect: '*obvios, si nomen non succurrit*, Dominos *appellamus*' (Sen. Ep. 3). And in that lower sense, Pliny, it should seem, here employs it. *M.*

† Alluding to the execrable reign of Domitian. *M.*

LETTER III. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The experience, most excellent Emperor, I have had of your unbounded generosity to me, in my own person, encourages me to hope I may be yet farther obliged to it, in that of my friends. Voconius Romanus (who was my schoolfellow and companion from our earliest years) claims the first rank in that number; in consequence of which I petitioned your sacred father to promote him to the dignity of the senatorial order. But the completion of my request is reserved to your goodness; for his mother had not then advanced, in the manner the law directs, the liberal gift of four hundred thousand sesterces,* which she engaged to give him, in her letter to the late emperor, your father. This, however, by my advice she has since done, having made over certain estates to him, as well as completed every other act necessary to make the conveyance valid. The difficulties therefore being removed which deferred the gratification of our wishes, it is with full confidence I venture to assure you of the worth of my friend Romanus,

* In the original it is, '*sestertii quadringinties*,' that is, about £340,000 sterling; a sum so immoderate that the commentators have suspected (and with great reason) some error must have crept into the text. Buchner and Gronovius imagine it should be read *quarterdecies* or *quadragies*; but this seems to be still carrying it much too high. The *census senatorius*, or the estate requisite to qualify a man to be a member of the senate, was, after different regulations, settled at length by Augustus at 1,200,000 sesterces, equal to about £5000 of our money. It probably stood thus in Pliny's time; for as it appears by the 19th letter of the first book that the *census equestris* was 400,000 sesterces, which is just the sum we find it at in the reign of Augustus, so it will not, perhaps, be unreasonable to infer from thence that the *census senatorius* had not yet undergone any alteration since the time of that emperor, as they seem to have borne a certain proportion to each other. For these reasons, therefore, both the common reading and the emendation of the above-mentioned critics are rejected in the translation, and the conjecture of a late editor[1] adopted, who supposes it might be '*quadringentorum millium*, 400,000 sesterces, or about £3100 of our money. It has been disputed whether by this *census senatorius* we are to understand the yearly income of the estate, or only the entire value of it: but the most generally received opinion is that it means the latter, both real and personal. *M.*

[1] Gesner.

heightened and adorned as it is not only by liberal culture, but by his extraordinary tenderness to his parents as well. It is to that virtue he owes the present liberality of his mother; as well as his immediate succession * to his late father's estate, and his adoption by his father-in-law. To these personal qualifications, the wealth and rank of his family give additional lustre; and I persuade myself it will be some further recommendation that I solicit in his behalf. Let me, then, entreat you, Sir, to enable me to congratulate Romanus on so desirable an occasion, and at the same time to indulge an eager and, I hope, laudable ambition, of having it in my power to boast that your favourable regards are extended not only to myself, but also to my friend.

LETTER IV. [XX.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.†

When by your gracious indulgence, Sir, I was appointed to preside at the treasury of Saturn,‡ I immediately re-

* Meaning, perhaps, that though he was under age when his father died, yet he had so much confidence in the prudence of Romanus that he did not appoint him, as usual, a guardian by his will, but left him to the immediate possession of his estate. *M.*

† *N.B.* The following letters, to the 30th, are not arranged in the same order as they are placed in any of the Latin editions; the translator having taken the liberty of changing their situation, for the sake of bringing some letters together which throw a light upon each other. The figures included between this mark [ ] refer to the order in which they commonly stand. *M.*

‡ The public treasure was kept in the temple of Saturn, where the spoils of the conquered nations were deposited. Julius Caesar seized upon this temple in the time of the civil war; and what an immense wealth that threw into his hands, may be judged by the elegant description which Lucan gives of the riches it contained:

. . . . '*tunc conditus imo*
Eruitur templis, multis intactus ab annis
Romani census populi,' &c. Lucan. iii. 155.

TRANSLATION.

'At length the sacred storehouse open laid,
The hoarded wealth of ages past display'd:
There might be seen the sums proud Carthage sent,
Her long impending ruin to prevent;
There heap'd the Macedonian treasures shone,
What great Flaminius and Aemilius won

nounced all engagements of the bar (as indeed I never blended business of that kind with the functions of the state), that no avocations might call off my attention from the post to which I was appointed. For this reason, when the province of Africa petitioned the senate that I might undertake their cause against Marius Priscus, I excused myself from that office; and my excuse was allowed. But when afterwards the consul elect proposed that the senate should apply to us again, and endeavour to prevail with us to yield to its inclinations, and suffer our names to be thrown into the urn,* I thought it most agreeable to that tranquillity and good order which so happily distinguishes your times not to oppose (especially in so reasonable an instance) the will of that august assembly. And, as I am desirous that all my words and actions may receive the sanction of your exemplary virtue, I hope you approve of my compliance.

From vanquish'd Philip and his hapless son.
There lay what flying Pyrrhus lost, the gold
Scorn'd by the patriot's [1] honesty of old;
Whate'er our parsimonious sires could save:
What tributary gifts rich Syria gave;
The hundred Cretan cities' ample spoil;
What Cato gather'd from the Cyprian isle.
Riches of captive kings by Pompey borne
In happier days his triumph to adorn,
From utmost India, and the rising morn;
Wealth infinite!' (Rowe.) *M.*

Pliny the elder has given a particular account [2] of this treasure which Caesar seized, both in gold and silver plate and in coin; the amount which, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's computation, is £1,093,979 3*s.* 4*d.* But if there is no mistake in these sums, Caesar did not take away nearly as much as he brought in; for Plutarch relates [3] that he placed at one time in the treasury 65,000 talents, which, according to the same ingenious author's calculation, is equivalent to £12,593,750. Arb. Tab. 191. *M.*

* Other senators, as well as Pliny, had excused themselves, it seems, from undertaking the management of this cause: it was proposed therefore that they should cast lots; which is the meaning of 'suffering their names to be thrown into an urn;' an urn being made use of in decisions of this kind. Accordingly the lot fell upon our author and his great friend, the famous Cornelius Tacitus. See book ii. letter xi., where there is a full account of this trial. *M.*

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[1] Fabricius. [2] Hist. Nat. l. xxxiii. c. 3. [3] In Vit. Caesar.

LETTER V. [xxi.] Trajan *to* Pliny.

You acted as became a good citizen and a worthy senator, by paying obedience to the just requisition of that august asembly: and I have full confidence you will faithfully discharge the business you have undertaken.

LETTER VI. [iv.] *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Having been attacked last year by a very severe and dangerous illness, I employed a physician,* whose care and diligence, Sir, I cannot sufficiently reward, but by your gracious assistance. I entreat you therefore to make him a denizen † of Rome; for as he is the freedman of a foreign lady, he is, consequently, himself also a foreigner. His name is Harpocras; his patroness (who has been dead a considerable time) was Thermuthis, the daughter of Theon. I further entreat you to bestow the full privileges of a Roman citizen upon Hedia and Antonia Harmeris, the freedwomen of Antonia Maximilla, a lady of great merit. It is at her desire ‡ I make this request.

LETTER VII. [xxii.] *To* the Emperor Trajan.

I return you thanks, Sir, for your ready compliance with my desire, in granting the complete privileges of a Roman to the freedwomen of a lady to whom I am allied and also for making Harpocras, my physician, a denizen of

* The physicians among the ancients were distinguished according to the particular branch of practice to which they confined themselves The physician here mentioned, Pliny calls *Iatraliptes*, that is, one who applied external unctions. *M.*

† There was a difference between the *jus civitatis* and the *jus quiritium;* the former not extending to the same privileges as the latter, which comprehended whatever advantages a free native of Rome was entitled to: just in the same manner as with us there is a distinction between denization and naturalisation. *M.*

‡ Pliny mentions his request to be at the particular desire of Maximilla, because nothing of this kind could legally be granted to a freedman without the consent of his patron, a name which was given to the master of a slave who had been made free. *M.*

Rome. But when, agreeably to your directions, I gave in an account of his age and estate, I was informed by those who are better skilled in the affairs than I pretend to be that, as he is an Egyptian, I ought first to have obtained for him the freedom of Alexandria before he was made free of Rome. I confess, indeed, as I was ignorant of any difference in this case between those of Egypt * and other countries, I contented myself with only acquainting you that he had been manumitted by a foreign lady long since deceased. However, it is an ignorance I cannot regret, since it affords me an opportunity of receiving from you a double obligation in favour of the same person. That I may legally therefore enjoy the benefit of your goodness, I beg you would be pleased to grant him the freedom of the city of Alexandria, as well as that of Rome. And that your gracious intentions may not meet with any further obstacles, I have taken care, as you directed, to send an account to your freedman of his age and possessions.

LETTER VIII. [XXIII.] TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

It is my resolution, in pursuance of the maxim observed by the princes my predecessors, to be extremely cautious in granting the freedom of the city of Alexandria: however, since you have obtained of me the freedom of Rome for your physician Harpocras, I cannot refuse you this other request. You must let me know to what district he belongs, that I may give you a letter to my friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

LETTER IX. [V.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I cannot express, Sir, the pleasure your letter gave me, by which I am informed that you have made my physi-

* Upon what occasion the honour of this peculiar distinction was granted in favour of Alexandria does not appear; possibly it might be in gratitude to a country to which the Romans were so highly obliged, being supplied with the greatest part of their corn from Egypt. This city, founded by Alexander the Great, was esteemed the most considerable in the world next to that of Rome. *M.*

cian Harpocras a denizen of Alexandria; notwithstanding your resolution to follow the maxim of your predecessors in this point, by being extremely cautious in granting that privilege. Agreeably to your directions, I acquaint you that Harpocras belongs to the district of Memphis.* I entreat you then, most gracious Emperor, to send me, as you promised, a letter to your friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

As I purpose (in order to have the earliest enjoyment of your presence, so ardently wished for here) to come to meet you, I beg, Sir, you would permit me to extend my journey as far as possible.

LETTER X. [VI.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I was greatly obliged, Sir, in my late illness, to Posthumius Marinus, my physician; and I cannot make him a suitable return, but by the assistance of your wonted gracious indulgence. I entreat you then to make Chrysippus Mithridates and his wife Stratonica (who are related to Marinus) denizens of Rome. I entreat likewise the same privilege in favour of Epigonus and Mithridates, the two sons of Chrysippus; but with this restriction † that they may remain under the dominion of their father, and yet preserve their right of patronage over their own freedmen. I further entreat you to grant the full privileges of a Roman to L. Satrius Abascantius, P. Caesius

* One of the four governments of Lower Egypt. *M.*

† The extensive power of paternal authority was (as has been observed in the notes above) peculiar to the Romans. But after Chrysippus was made a denizen of Rome, he was not, it would seem, consequentially entitled to that privilege over those children which were born before his denization. On the other hand, if it was expressly granted him, his children could not preserve their right of patronage over their own freedmen, because that right would of course devolve to their father, by means of this acquired dominion over them. The denization therefore of his children is as expressly solicited as his own. But both parties becoming *quirites*, the children by this creation, and not pleading in right of their father, would be *patres fam.* To prevent which the clause is added, '*ita ut sint in patris potestate:*' as there is another to save to them their rights of patronage over their freedmen, though they were reduced *in patriam potestatem. M.*

Phosphorus, and Pancharia Soteris. This request I make with the consent of their patrons.

LETTER XI. [XXIV.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

After your late sacred father, Sir, had, in a noble speech, as well as by his own generous example, exhorted and encouraged the public to acts of munificence, I implored his permission to remove the several statues which I had of the former emperors to my corporation,* and at the same time requested permission to add his own to the number. For as I had hitherto let them remain in the respective places in which they stood when they were left to me by several different inheritances, they were dispersed in distant parts of my estate. He was pleased to grant my request, and at the same time to give me a very ample testimony of his approbation. I immediately, therefore, wrote to the decurii, to desire they would allot a piece of ground, upon which I might build a temple at my own expense; and they, as a mark of honour to my design, offered me the choice of any site I might think proper. However, my own ill-health in the first place, and later that of your father, together with the duties of that employment which you were both pleased to entrust me, prevented my proceeding with that design. But I have now, I think, a convenient opportunity of making an excursion for that purpose, as my monthly attendance† ends on the 1st of September, and there are several festivals in the month following. My first request, then, is that you would permit me to adorn the temple I am going to erect with your statue, and next (in order to the execution of my design with all the expedition possible) that you would indulge me with leave of absence. It would ill become the sincerity I profess, were I to

* It is highly probable, upon comparing letter iv. book iii. and letter i. book iv., that by the corporation here mentioned Pliny means Tifernum Tiberinum, or Citta di Castello, as it is now called; which city had put itself under his patronage and protection. *M.*

† Pliny enjoyed the office of treasurer in conjunction with Cornutus Tertullus. It was the custom at Rome for those who had colleagues to administer the duties of their posts by monthly turns. Buchner. *M.*

dissemble that your goodness in complying with this desire will at the same time be extremely serviceable to me in my own private affairs. It is absolutely necessary I should not defer any longer the letting of my lands in that province; for, besides that they amount to above four hundred thousand sesterces,* the time for dressing the vineyards is approaching, and *that* business must fall upon my new tenants. The unfruitfulness of the seasons besides, for several years past, obliges me to think of making some abatements in my rents; which I cannot possibly settle unless I am present. I shall be indebted then to your indulgence, Sir, for the expedition of my work of piety, and the settlement of my own private affairs, if you will be pleased to grant me leave of absence† for thirty days. I cannot give myself a shorter time, as the town and the estate of which I am speaking lie above a hundred and fifty miles from Rome.

LETTER XII. [XXV.] TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You have given me many private reasons, and every public one, why you desire leave of absence; but I need no other than that it is your desire: and I doubt not of your returning as soon as possible to the duty of an office which so much requires your attendance. As I would not seem to check any instance of your affection towards me, I shall not oppose your erecting my statue in the place

* About £3100 sterling; the annual income of Pliny's estate in Tuscany. He mentions another near Comum in Milan, the yearly value of which does not appear. We find him likewise meditating the purchase of an estate, for which he was to give about £23,400 of our money; but whether he ever completed that purchase is uncertain. (See book iii. letter xix.) This, however, we are sure of, that his fortunes were but moderate, considering his high station and necessary expenses (see book ii. letter iv.): and yet, by the advantage of a judicious œconomy, we have seen him, in the course of these letters, exercising a liberality of which after-ages have furnished no parallel. *M.*

† The senators were not allowed to go from Rome into the provinces without having first obtained leave of the emperor. Sicily, however, had the privilege to be excepted out of that law; as Gallia Narbonensis afterwards was, by Claudius Cæsar. Tacit. Ann. xii. c. 23. *M.*

you desire; though in general I am extremely cautious in giving any encouragement to honours of that kind.

LETTER XIII. [VIII.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

As I am sensible, Sir, that the highest applause my actions can receive is to be distinguished by so excellent a prince, I beg you would be graciously pleased to add either the office of augur or septemvir* (both which are now vacant) to the dignity I already enjoy by your indulgence; that I may have the satisfaction of publicly offering up those vows for your prosperity, from the duty of my office, which I daily prefer to the gods in private, from the affection of my heart.

LETTER XIV. [XXVI.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Having safely passed the promontory of Malea,† I am arrived at Ephesus‡ with all my retinue, notwithstanding I was detained for some time by contrary winds: a piece of information, Sir, in which, I trust, you will feel yourself concerned. I propose pursuing the remainder of my journey to the province§ partly in light vessels, and partly in post-chaises: for as the excessive heats will prevent my travelling altogether by land, so the Etesian winds,‖

* One of the seven priests who presided over the feasts appointed in honour of Jupiter and the other gods an office, as appears, of high dignity, since Pliny ranks it with the augurship: of which see book iv. letter viii. note †. *M.*

† In the Peloponnesus. Catanaeus observes this passage was so dangerous that the ancients had a proverb, '*cum Maleam deflexeris, domesticos obliviscere;*' 'the man that sails by Malea must think no more of his family.' *M.*

‡ A city of Ionia, in Asia Minor, still remaining.

§ Bithynia, a province in Anatolia, or Asia Minor, of which Pliny was appointed governor by Trajan, in the sixth year of his reign, A.D. 103, not as an ordinary proconsul, but as that emperor's own lieutenant, with powers extraordinary. (See Dio.) The following letters were written during his administration of that province. *M.*

‖ A north wind in the Grecian seas, which rises yearly some time in July, and continues to the end of August; though others extend it to the middle of September. They blow only in the day-time. Varenius's Geogr. v. i. p. 513. *M.*

which are now set in, will not permit me to proceed entirely by sea.

LETTER XV. [XXVII.] Trajan *to* Pliny.

Your information, my dear Pliny, was extremely agreeable to me, as it *does* concern me to know in what manner you arrive at your province. It is a wise intention of yours to travel either by sea or land, as you shall find most convenient.

LETTER XVI. [XXVIII.] *To* the Emperor Trajan.

As I had a very favourable voyage to Ephesus, so in travelling by post-chaise from thence I was extremely troubled by the heats, and also by some slight feverish attacks, which kept me some time at Pergamus.* From there, Sir, I got on board a coasting vessel, but, being again detained by contrary winds, did not arrive at Bithynia so soon as I had hoped.† However, I have no reason to complain of this delay, since (which indeed was the most auspicious circumstance that could attend me) I reached the province in time to celebrate your birthday. I am at present engaged in examining the finances of the Prusenses,‡ their expenses, revenues, and credits; and the farther I proceed in this work, the more I am convinced of the necessity of my enquiry. Several large sums of money are owing to the city from private persons, which they neglect to pay upon various pretences; as, on the other hand, I find the public funds are, in some instances, very

* The famous Troy, now called Bergamo, on the Caicus.

† The original adds, '*id est*, xv. *Calend. Octobris*,' which seems to have crept into the text from the marginal annotation of some glossarist: for as Pliny mentions the time of his arrival a little lower, there is no occasion for it in this place; and it is not agreeable to his usual elegant conciseness to repeat that circumstance twice in the same letter. Or perhaps here are two distinct letters run into one by the carelessness of the transcribers; the former ending with '*Haec*,' &c. '*in ipso ingressu meo scripsi*;' the latter beginning with '*Quintodecimo Calend.*' &c. *M.*

‡ The inhabitants of Prusa (Brusa), a principal city of Bithynia.

unwarrantably applied. This, Sir, I write to you immediately on my arrival. I entered this province on the 17th of September,* and found in it that obedience and loyalty towards yourself which you justly merit from all mankind. You will consider, Sir, whether it would not be proper to send a surveyor here; for I am inclined to think much might be deducted from what is charged by those who have the conduct of the public works if a faithful admeasurement were to be taken: at least I am of that opinion from what I have already seen of the accounts of this city, which I am now going into as fully as is possible.

LETTER XVII. [XXIX.] TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I should have rejoiced to have heard that you arrived at Bithynia without the smallest inconvenience to yourself or any of your retinue, and that your journey from Ephesus had been as easy as your voyage to that place was favourable. For the rest, your letter informs me, my dearest Secundus, on what day you reached Bithynia. The people of that province will be convinced, I persuade myself, that I am attentive to their interest; as your conduct towards them will make it manifest that I could have chosen no more proper person to supply my place. The examination of the public accounts ought certainly to be your first employment, as they are evidently in great disorder. I have scarcely surveyors sufficient to inspect those works † which I am carrying on at Rome, and in the neighbourhood; but persons of integrity and skill in this art may be found, most certainly, in every province, so that they will not fail you if only you will make due enquiry.

* In the sixth year of Trajan's reign, A.D. 103, and the 41st of our author's age: he continued in this province about eighteen months. Vid. Mass. in Vit. Plin. 129. *M*

† Among other noble works which this glorious emperor executed, the forum or square which went by his name seems to have been the most magnificent. It was built with the foreign spoils he had taken in war. The covering of this edifice was all brass, the porticoes exceedingly beautiful and magnificent, with pillars of more than ordinary height and dimensions. In the centre of this forum was erected the famous pillar which has been already described. See book viii. letter iv. note †. *M.*

LETTER XVIII. [VII.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Though I am well assured, Sir, that you, who never omit any opportunity of exerting your generosity, are not unmindful of the request I lately made to you, yet, as you have often indulged me in this manner, give me leave to remind and earnestly entreat you to bestow the praetorship now vacant upon Attius Sura. Though his ambition is extremely moderate, yet the quality of his birth, the inflexible integrity he has preserved in a very narrow fortune, and, more than all, the felicity of your times, which encourages conscious virtue to claim your favour, induce him to hope he may experience it in the present instance.

LETTER XIX. [IX.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN

I congratulate both you and the public, most excellent Emperor, upon the great and glorious victory you have obtained; so agreeable to the heroism of ancient Rome. May the immortal gods grant the same happy success to all your designs, that, under the administration of so many princely virtues, the splendour of the empire may shine out, not only in its former, but with additional lustre.*

LETTER XX. [X.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

My lieutenant, Servilius Pudens, came to Nicomedia,† Sir, on the 24th of November, and by his arrival freed me, at length, from the anxiety of a very uneasy expectation.

* It is probable the victory here alluded to was that famous one which Trajan gained over the Dacians; some account of which has been given in the notes above. It is certain, at least, Pliny lived to see his wish accomplished, this emperor having carried the Roman splendour to its highest pitch, and extended the dominions of the empire farther than any of his predecessors; as after his death it began to decline. *M.*

† The capital of Bithynia; its modern name is Izmid.

LETTER XXI. [XI.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Your generosity to me, Sir, was the occasion of uniting me to Rosianus Geminus, by the strongest ties; for he was my quaestor * when I was consul. His behaviour to me during the continuance of our offices was highly respectful, and he has treated me ever since with so peculiar a regard that, besides the many obligations I owe him upon a public account, I am indebted to him for the strongest pledges of private friendship. I entreat you, then, to comply with my request for the advancement of one whom (if my recommendation has any weight) you will even distinguish with your particular favour; and whatever trust you shall repose in him, he will endeavour to show himself still deserving of an higher. But I am the more sparing in my praises of him, being persuaded his integrity, his probity, and his vigilance are well known to you, not only from those high posts which he has exercised in Rome within your immediate inspection, but from his behaviour when he served under you in the army. One thing, however, my affection for him inclines me to think, I have not yet sufficiently done; and therefore, Sir, I repeat my entreaties that you will give me the pleasure, as early as possible, of rejoicing in the advancement of my quaestor, or, in other words, of receiving an addition to my own honours, in the person of my friend.

LETTER XXII. [XII.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is not easy, Sir, to express the joy I received when I heard you had, in compliance with the request of my mother-in-law † and myself, granted Coelius Clemens the proconsulship of this province ‡ after the expiration of his consular office; as it is from thence I learn the full extent of your goodness towards me, which thus graciously extends itself through my whole family. As I dare not pretend to make an equal return to those obligations I so justly owe you, I can only have recourse to vows, and ardently

* See note *, p. 130. † Pompeia Celerina. ‡ Bithynia.

implore the gods that I may not be found unworthy of those favours which you are repeatedly conferring upon me.

LETTER XXIII. [XIII.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I received, Sir, a despatch from your freedman, Lycormas, desiring me, if any embassy from Bosporus * should come here on the way to Rome, that I would detain it till his arrival. None has yet arrived, at least in the city † where I now am. But a courier passing through this place from the king of Sarmatia,‡ I embrace the opportunity which accidentally offers itself, of sending with him the messenger which Lycormas despatched hither, that you might be informed by both their letters of what, perhaps, it may be expedient you should be acquainted with at one and the same time.

LETTER XXIV. [XIV.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I am informed by a letter from the king of Sarmatia that there are certain affairs of which you ought to be informed as soon as possible. In order, therefore, to hasten the despatches which his courier was charged with to you, I granted him an order to make use of the public post.§

* The town of Panticapoeum, also called Bosporus, standing on the European side of the Cimmerian Bosporus (Straits of Kaffa), in the modern Crimea.

† Nicea (as appears by the 15th letter of this book), a city in Bithynia, now called Isnik. *M.*

‡ Sarmatia was divided into European, Asiatic, and German Sarmatia. It is not exactly known what bounds the ancients gave to this extensive region; however, in general, it comprehended the northern part of Russia, and the greater part of Poland, &c. *M.*

§ The first invention of public couriers is ascribed to Cyrus, who, in order to receive the earliest intelligence from the governors of the several provinces,[1] erected post-houses throughout the kingdom of Persia, at equal distances, which supplied men and horses to forward the public despatches. Augustus[2] was the first who introduced this most useful institution among the Romans, by employing post-chaises,

[1] Cyrop. l. viii. p. 496, edit. Hutchinson. [2] Suet. in Vit. Aug. c. 49.

LETTER XXV. [XV.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The ambassador from the king of Sarmatia having remained two days, by his own choice, at Nicea, I did not think it reasonable, Sir, to detain him any longer: because, in the first place, it was still uncertain when your freedman, Lycormas, would arrive, and then again some indispensable affairs require my presence in a different part of the province. Of this I thought it necessary that you should be informed, because I lately acquainted you in a letter that Lycormas had desired, if any embassy should come this way from Bosporus, that I would detain it till his arrival. But I saw no plausible pretext for keeping him back any longer, especially as the despatches from Lycormas, which (as I mentioned before) I was not willing to detain, would probably reach you some days sooner than this ambassador.

LETTER XXVI. [XVI.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I received a letter, Sir, from Apuleius, a military man, belonging to the garrison at Nicomedia, informing me that one Callidromus, being arrested by Maximus and Dionysius (two bakers, to whom he had hired himself), fled for refuge to your statue; * that, being brought before a magistrate,

disposed at convenient distances, for the purpose of political intelligence. The magistrates of every city were obliged to furnish horses [1] for these messengers, upon producing a *diploma*, or a kind of warrant, either from the emperor himself or from those who had that authority under him. Sometimes, though upon very extraordinary occasions, persons who travelled upon their private affairs, were allowed the use of these post-chaises. (See letter cxxi. of this book.) It is surprising they were not sooner used for the purposes of commerce and private communication. Louis XI. first established them in France, in the year 1474; but it was not till the 12th of Car. II.[2] that the post-office was settled in England by Act of Parliament. *M.*

* Particular temples, altars, and statues, were allowed among the Romans as places of privilege and sanctuary to slaves, debtors, and malefactors. This custom was introduced by Romulus, who borrowed

[1] Plutarch. in Vit. Galbae

[2] Rapin, vol. ii. 662, fol. ed.

he declared he was formerly slave to Laberius Maximus, but being taken prisoner by Susagus * in Moesia†, he was sent as a present from Decebalus to Pacorus, king of Parthia, in whose service he continued several years, from whence he made his escape, and came to Nicomedia. When he was examined before me, he confirmed this account, for which reason I thought it necessary to send ‡ him to you. This I should have done sooner, but I delayed his journey in order to make an inquiry concerning a seal ring which he said was taken from him, upon which was engraven the figure of Pacorus in his royal robes; I was desirous (if it could have been found) of transmitting this curiosity to you, with a small gold nugget which he says he brought from out of the Parthian mines. I have affixed my seal to it, the impression of which is a chariot drawn by four horses.

LETTER XXVII. [xvii.] *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Your freedman and procurator, § Maximus, behaved, Sir, during all the time we were together, with great probity, attention, and diligence; as one strongly attached to your interest, and strictly observant of discipline. This testimony I willingly give him; and I give it with all the fidelity I owe you.

it probably from the Greeks; but during the free state of Rome, few of these asylums were permitted. This custom prevailed most under the emperors, till it grew so scandalous that the Emperor Pius found it necessary to restrain those privileged places by an edict. See Lipsii Excurs. ad Taciti Ann. iii. c. 36. *M.*

* General under Decebalus, king of the Dacians. *M.*

† A province in Dacia, comprehending the southern parts of Servia and part of Bulgaria. *M.*

‡ The second expedition of Trajan against Decebalus was undertaken the same year that Pliny went governor into this province; the reason therefore why Pliny sent this Callidromus to the emperor seems to be, that some use might possibly be made of him in favour of that design. *M.*

§ Receiver of the finances. *M.*

LETTER XXVIII. [XVIII.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

After having experienced, Sir, in Gabius Bassus, who commands on the Pontic* coast, the greatest integrity, honour, and diligence, as well as the most particular respect to myself, I cannot refuse him my best wishes and suffrage; and I give them to him with all that fidelity which is due to you. I have found him abundantly qualified by having served in the army under you; and it is owing to the advantages of your discipline that he has learned to merit your favour. The soldiery and the people here, who have had full experience of his justice and humanity, rival each other in that glorious testimony they give of his conduct, both in public and in private; and I certify this with all the sincerity you have a right to expect from me.

LETTER XXIX. [XIX.] *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Nymphidius Lupus,† Sir, and myself, served in the army together; he commanded a body of the auxiliary forces at the same time that I was military tribune; and it was from thence my affection for him began. A long acquaintance has since mutually endeared and strengthened our friendship. For this reason I did violence to his repose, and insisted upon his attending me into Bithynia, as my assessor in council. He most readily granted me this proof of his friendship; and without any regard to the plea of age, or the ease of retirement, he shared, and continues to share, with me, the fatigue of public business. I consider his relations, therefore, as my own; in which number Nymphidius Lupus, his son, claims my particular regard. He is a youth of great merit and indefatigable

* The coast round the Black Sea.

† The text calls him *primipilarem*, that is, one who had been *primipilus*, an officer in the army, whose post was both highly honourable and profitable; among other parts of his office he had the care of the eagle, or chief standard of the legion. *M.*

application, and in every respect well worthy of so excellent a father. The early proof he gave of his merit, when he commanded a regiment of foot, shows him to be equal to any honour you may think proper to confer upon him; and it gained him the strongest testimony of approbation from those most illustrious personages, Julius Ferox and Fuscus Salinator. And I will add, Sir, that I shall rejoice in any accession of dignity which he shall receive as an occasion of particular satisfaction to myself.

LETTER XXX. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

I beg your determination, Sir, on a point I am exceedingly doubtful about: it is whether I should place the public slaves * as sentries round the prisons of the several cities in this province (as has been hitherto the practice) or employ a party of soldiers for that purpose? On the one hand, I am afraid the public slaves will not attend this duty with the fidelity they ought; and on the other, that it will engage too large a body of the soldiery. In the meanwhile I have joined a few of the latter with the former. I am apprehensive, however, there may be some danger that this method will occasion a general neglect of duty, as it will afford them a mutual opportunity of throwing the blame upon each other.

LETTER XXXI. Trajan *to* Pliny.

There is no occasion, my dearest Secundus, to draw off any soldiers † in order to guard the prisons. Let us rather persevere in the ancient customs observed in this province, of employing the public slaves for that purpose; and the fidelity with which they shall execute their duty will

* Slaves who were purchased by the public. *M.*

† In the original it is *commilitones*, "my fellow-soldiers:" an appellation which those emperors who desired to be well with the army affected to use. Suetonius informs us that Augustus would never employ that expression, as thinking it a condescension unbecoming his dignity, and neither suitable to the tranquillity of the times nor to military discipline. *M.*

depend much upon your care and strict discipline. It is greatly to be feared, as you observe, if the soldiers should be mixed with the public slaves, they will mutually trust to each other, and by that means grow so much the more negligent. But my principal objection is that as few soldiers as possible should be withdrawn from their standard.

LETTER XXXII *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Gabius Bassus, who commands upon the frontiers of Pontica, in a manner suitable to the respect and duty which he owes you, came to me, and has been with me, Sir, for several days. As far as I could observe, he is a person of great merit and worthy of your favour. I acquainted him it was your order that he should retain only ten beneficiary * soldiers, two horse-guards, and one centurion out of the troops which you were pleased to assign to my command. He assured me those would not be sufficient, and that he would write to you accordingly; for which reason I thought it proper not immediately to recall his supernumeraries.

LETTER XXXIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I have received from Gabius Bassus the letter you mention, acquainting me that the number of soldiers I had ordered him was not sufficient; and for your information I have directed my answer to be hereunto annexed. It is very material to distinguish between what the exigency of affairs requires and what an ambitious desire of extending power may think necessary. As for ourselves,

* The most probable conjecture (for it is a point of a good deal of obscurity) concerning the *beneficiarii* seems to be that they were a certain number of soldiers exempted from the usual duty of their office, in order to be employed as a sort of body-guards to the general. These were probably foot; as the *equites* here mentioned were perhaps of the same nature, only that they served on horseback. *Equites singulares Caesaris Augusti*, &c., are frequently met with upon ancient inscriptions, and are generally supposed to mean the body-guards of the emperor. *M.*

the public welfare must be our only guide: accordingly it is incumbent upon us to take all possible care that the soldiers shall not be absent from their standard.

LETTER XXXIV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The Prusenses, Sir, having an ancient bath which lies in a ruinous state, desire your leave to repair it; but, upon examination, I am of opinion it ought to be rebuilt. I think, therefore, you may indulge them in this request, as there will be a sufficient fund for that purpose, partly from those debts which are due from private persons * to the public which I am now collecting in; and partly from what they raise among themselves towards furnishing the bath with oil, which they are willing to apply to the carrying on of this building; a work which the dignity of the city and the splendour of your times seem to demand.

LETTER XXXV. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

If the erecting a public bath will not be too great a charge upon the Prusenses, we may comply with their request; provided, however, that no new tax be levied for this purpose, nor any of those taken off which are appropriated to necessary services.

LETTER XXXVI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I am assured, Sir, by your freedman and receiver-general Maximus, that it is necessary he should have a party of soldiers assigned to him, over and besides the *beneficiarii*,† which by your orders I allotted to the very worthy Gemellinus. Those therefore which I found in his service, I thought proper he should retain, especially as he was going into Paphlagonia,‡ in order to procure

* See letter xvi. of this book. *M.*

† See letter xxxii. of this book, in note. *M.*

‡ A province in Asia Minor, bounded by the Black Sea on the north, Bithynia on the west, Pontus on the east, and Phrygia on the south.

corn. For his better protection likewise, and because it was his request, I added two of the cavalry. But I beg you would inform me, in your next despatches, what method you would have me observe for the future in points of this nature.

LETTER XXXVII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

As my freedman Maximus was going upon an extraordinary commission to procure corn, I approve of your having supplied him with a file of soldiers. But when he shall return to the duties of his former post, I think two from you and as many from his coadjutor, my receiver general Virdius Gemellinus, will be sufficient.

LETTER XXXVIII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The very excellent young man Sempronius Caelianus, having discovered two slaves * among the recruits, has sent them to me. But I deferred passing sentence till I had consulted you, the restorer and upholder of military discipline, concerning the punishment proper to be inflicted upon them. My principal doubt is that, whether, although they have taken the military oath, they are yet entered into any particular legion. I request you therefore, Sir, to inform me what course I should pursue in this affair, especially as it concerns example.

* The Roman policy excluded slaves from entering into military service, and it was death if they did so. However, upon cases of great necessity, this maxim was dispensed with; but then they were first made free before they were received into the army, excepting only (as Servius in his notes upon Virgil) observes after the fatal battle of Cannae; when the public distress was so great that the Romans recruited their army with their slaves, though they had not time to give them their freedom. One reason, perhaps, of this policy might be that they did not think it safe to arm so considerable a body of men, whose numbers, in the times when the Roman luxury was at its highest, we may have some idea of by the instance which Pliny the naturalist mentions of Claudius Isodorus, who at the time of his death was possessed of no less than 4116 slaves, notwithstanding he had lost great numbers in the civil wars. Plin. Hist. Nat. xxxiii. 10. *M.*

LETTER XXXIX. Trajan *to* Pliny.

Sempronius Caelinus has acted agreeably to my orders, in sending such persons to be tried before you as appear to deserve capital punishment. It is material however, in the case in question, to inquire whether these slaves inlisted themselves voluntarily, or were chosen by the officers, or presented as substitutes for others. If they were chosen, the officer is guilty; if they are substitutes, the blame rests with those who deputed them; but if, conscious of the legal inabilities of their station, they presented themselves voluntarily, the punishment must fall upon their own heads. That they are not yet entered into any legion, makes no great difference in their case; for they ought to have given a true account of themselves immediately, upon their being approved as fit for the service.

LETTER XL. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

As I have your permission, Sir, to address myself to you in all my doubts, you will not consider it beneath your dignity to descend to those humbler affairs which concern my administration of this province. I find there are in several cities, particularly those of Nicomedia and Nicea, certain persons who take upon themselves to act as public slaves,* and receive an annual stipend accordingly; notwithstanding they have been condemned either to the mines, the public games,† or other punishments of the like nature. Having received information of this abuse I have been long debating with myself what I ought to do. On the one hand, to send them back again to their respective punishments (many of them being now grown old, and behaving, as I am assured, with sobriety and modesty) would, I thought, be proceeding against them too severely; on the other, to retain convicted criminals

* See note, letter xxx. of this book. *M.*

† A punishment among the Romans, usually inflicted upon slaves, by which they were to engage with wild beasts, or perform the part of gladiators, in the public shows. *M.*

in the public service, seemed not altogether decent. I considered at the same time to support these people in idleness would be an useless expense to the public; and to leave them to starve would be dangerous. I was obliged therefore to suspend the determination of this matter till I could consult with you. You will be desirous, perhaps, to be informed how it happened that these persons escaped the punishments to which they were condemned. This enquiry I have also made, but cannot return you any satisfactory answer. The decrees against them were indeed produced; but no record appears of their having ever been reversed. It was asserted, however, that these people were pardoned upon their petition to the proconsuls, or their lieutenants; which seems likely to be the truth, as it is improbable any person would have dared to set them at liberty without authority.

LETTER XLI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You will remember you were sent into Bithynia for the particular purpose of correcting those many abuses which appeared in need of reform. Now none stands more so than that of criminals who have been sentenced to punishment should not only be set at liberty (as your letter informs me) without authority, but even appointed to employments which ought only to be exercised by persons whose characters are irreproachable. Those therefore among them who have been convicted within these ten years, and whose sentence has not been reversed by proper authority, must be sent back again to their respective punishments: but where more than ten years have elapsed since their conviction, and they are grown old and infirm, let them be disposed of in such employments as are but few degrees removed from the punishments to which they were sentenced; that is, either to attend upon the public baths, cleanse the common sewers, or repair the streets and highways, the usual offices assigned to such persons.

LETTER XLII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

While I was making a progress in a different part of the province, a most extensive fire broke out at Nicomedia, which not only consumed several private houses, but also two public buildings; the town-house and the temple of Isis,* though they stood on contrary sides of the street. The occasion of its spreading thus far was partly owing to the violence of the wind, and partly to the indolence of the people, who, manifestly, stood idle and motionless spectators of this terrible calamity. The truth is the city was not furnished with either engines,† buckets, or any single instrument suitable for extinguishing fires; which I have now however given directions to have prepared. You will consider, Sir, whether it may not be advisable to institute a company of fire-men, consisting only of one hundred and fifty members. I will take care none but those of that business shall be admitted into it, and that the privileges granted them shall not be applied to any other purpose. As this corporate body will be restricted to so small a number of members, it will be easy to keep them under proper regulation.

LETTER XLIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You are of opinion it would be proper to establish a company of fire-men in Nicomedia, agreeably to what has been

* A celebrated Egyptian divinity.

† It has been generally imagined that the ancients had not the art of raising water by engines; but this passage seems to favour the contrary opinion. The word in the original is *sipho*, which Hesychius explains (as one of the commentators observes) '*instrumentum ad jaculandas aquas adversus incendia*;' 'an instrument to throw up water against fires. But there is a passage in Seneca which seems to put this matter beyond conjecture, though none of the critics upon this place have taken notice of it: '*Solemus*,' says he, '*duabus manibus inter se junctis aquam concipere, et compressa utrimque palma in modum siphonis exprimere*' (Q. N. l. ii. 16); where we plainly see the use of this *sipho* was to throw up water, and consequently the Romans were acquainted with that art. The account which Pliny gives of his fountains at Tuscum is likewise another evident proof. *M.*

practised in several other cities. But it is to be remembered that societies of this sort have greatly disturbed the peace of the province in general, and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purposes they may be founded, they will not fail to form themselves into factious assemblies, however short their meetings may be. It will therefore be safer to provide such machines as are of service in extinguishing fires, enjoining the owners of houses to assist in preventing the mischief from spreading, and, if it should be necessary, to call in the aid of the populace.

LETTER XLIV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

We have acquitted, Sir, and renewed our annual vows * for your prosperity, in which that of the empire is essentially involved, imploring the gods to grant us ever thus to pay and thus to repeat them.

LETTER XLV. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I received the satisfaction, my dearest Secundus, of being informed by your letter that you, together with the people under your government, have both discharged and renewed your vows to the immortal gods for my health and happiness.

LETTER XLVI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The citizens of Nicomedia, Sir, have expended three millions three hundred and twenty-nine sesterces † in building an aqueduct; but, not being able to finish it, the works are entirely falling to ruin. They made a second attempt in another place, where they laid out two millions.‡

* This was an anniversary custom observed throughout the empire on the 30th of December. *M.*

† About £23,400.

‡ About £15,600

But this likewise is discontinued; so that, after having been at an immense charge to no purpose, they must still be at a further expense, in order to be accommodated with water. I have examined a fine spring from whence the water may be conveyed over arches (as was attempted in their first design) in such a manner that the higher as well as level and low parts of the city may be supplied. There are still remaining a very few of the old arches; and the square stones, however, employed in the former building, may be used in turning the new arches. I am of opinion part should be raised with brick, as that will be the easier and cheaper material. But that this work may not meet with the same ill-success as the former, it will be necessary to send here an architect, or some one skilled in the construction of this kind of waterworks. And I will venture to say, from the beauty and usefulness of the design, it will be an erection well worthy the splendour of your times.

LETTER XLVII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

Care must be taken to supply the city of Nicomedia with water; and that business, I am well persuaded, you will perform with all the diligence you ought. But really it is no less incumbent upon you to examine by whose misconduct it has happened that such large sums have been thrown away upon this, lest they apply the money to private purposes, and the aqueduct in question, like the preceding, should be begun, and afterwards left unfinished. You will let me know the result of your inquiry.

LETTER XLVIII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

The citizens of Nicea, Sir, are building a theatre, which, though it is not yet finished, has already exhausted, as I am informed (for I have not examined the account myself), above ten millions of sesterces;* and, what is worse, I

* About £78,100. To those who are not acquainted with the immense riches of the ancients, it may seem incredible that a city, and not the capital one either, of a conquered province should expend so large a

fear to no purpose. For either from the foundation being laid in soft, marshy ground, or that the stone itself is light and crumbling, the walls are sinking, and cracked from top to bottom. It deserves your consideration, therefore, whether it would be best to carry on this work, or entirely discontinue it, or rather, perhaps, whether it would not be most prudent absolutely to destroy it: for the buttresses and foundations by means of which it is from time to time kept up appear to me more expensive than solid. Several private persons have undertaken to build the compartments of this theatre at their own expense, some engaging to erect the portico, others the galleries over the pit:* but this design cannot be executed, as the principal building which ought first to be completed is now at a stand. This city is also rebuilding, upon a far more enlarged plan, the gymnasium,† which was burnt down before my arrival in the province. They have already been at some (and, I rather fear, a fruitless) expense. The structure is not only irregular and ill-proportioned, but the present architect (who, it must be owned, is a rival to the person who was first employed) asserts that the walls, although twenty-two feet ‡ in thickness, are not

sum of money upon only the shell (as it appears to be) of a theatre: but Asia was esteemed the most considerable part of the world for wealth; its fertility and exportations (as Tully[1] observes) exceeding that of all other countries. The ingenious Dr. Arbuthnot quotes an instance from Athenaeus of Asiatic riches, which a man must be a tolerable arithmetician even to count. It is the value of the treasure of Sardanapalus, with which he made a funeral pile for himself and family when he was besieged by Arbaces, king of the Medes. 'Athenaeus makes the value of the treasure of this pile to amount to 100,000,000 talents, which, reckoned in Babylonic talents, amounts to £16,953,125,000. This was only the value of the silver; there was besides a tenth part of that number of talents of gold, which, if gold was reckoned in a decuple proportion, will just double that sum.' Arbuth. Ant. Coins, p. 203. *M.*

* The word *cavea*, in the original, comprehends more than what we call the *pit* in our theatres, as it means the whole space in which the spectators sat. These theatres being open at the top, the galleries here mentioned were for the convenience of retiring in bad weather. *M.*

† A place in which the athletic exercises were performed, and where the philosophers also used to read their lectures. *M.*

‡ The Roman foot consisted of 11·7 inches of our standard. *M.*

[1] Orat. pro Imp. Cn. Pomp.

strong enough to support the superstructure, as the interstices are filled up with quarrystones, and the walls are not overlaid with brickwork. Also the inhabitants of Claudiopolis * are sinking (I cannot call it erecting) a large public bath, upon a low spot of ground which lies at the foot of a mountain. The fund appropriated for the carrying on of this work arises from the money which those honorary members you were pleased to add to the senate paid (or, at least, are ready to pay whenever I call upon them) for their admission.† As I am afraid, therefore, the public money in the city of Nicea, and (what is infinitely more valuable than any pecuniary consideration) your bounty in that of Nicopolis, should be ill applied, I must desire you to send hither an architect to inspect, not only the theatre, but the bath; in order to consider whether, after all the expense which has already been laid out, it will be better to finish them upon the present plan, or alter the one, and remove the other, in as far as may seem necessary: for otherwise we may perhaps throw away our future cost in endeavouring not to lose what we have already expended.

LETTER XLIX. Trajan *to* Pliny.

You, who are upon the spot, will best be able to consider and determine what is proper to be done concerning the theatre which the inhabitants of Nicea are building; as for myself, it will be sufficient if you let me know your determination. With respect to the particular parts of this theatre which are to be raised at a private charge, you will see those engagements fulfilled when the body of the building to which they are to be annexed shall be finished.—These paltry Greeks‡ are, I know, immoderately fond of gymnastic diversions, and therefore, perhaps, the

* A colony in the district of Cataonia, in Cappadocia.

† The honorary senators, that is, such who were not received into the council of the city by election, but by the appointment of the emperor, paid a certain sum of money upon their admission into the senate. *M.*

‡ '*Graeculi.* Even under the empire, with its relaxed morality and luxurious tone, the Romans continued to apply this contemptuous designationto a people to whom they owed what taste for art and culture they possessed.' Church and Brodribb.

citizens of Nicea have planned a more magnificent building for this purpose than is necessary; however, they must be content with such as will be sufficient to answer the purpose for which it is intended. I leave it entirely to you to persuade the Claudiopolitani as you shall think proper with regard to their bath, which they have placed, it seems, in a very improper situation. As there is no province that is not furnished with men of skill and ingenuity, you cannot possibly want architects; unless you think it the shortest way to procure them from Rome, when it is generally from Greece that they come to us.

LETTER L. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

When I reflect upon the splendour of your exalted station, and the magnanimity of your spirit, nothing, I am persuaded, can be more suitable to both than to point out to you such works as are worthy of your glorious and immortal name, as being no less useful than magnificent. Bordering upon the territories of the city of Nicomedia is a most extensive lake; over which marbles, fruits, woods, and all kinds of materials, the commodities of the country, are brought over in boats up to the high-road, at little trouble and expense, but from thence are conveyed in carriages to the sea-side, at a much greater charge and with great labour. To remedy this inconvenience, many hands will be in request; but upon such an occasion they cannot be wanting: for the country, and particularly the city, is exceedingly populous; and one may assuredly hope that every person will readily engage in a work which will be of universal benefit. It only remains then to send hither, if you shall think proper, a surveyor or an architect, in order to examine whether the lake lies above the level of the sea; the engineers of this province being of opinion that the former is higher by forty cubits.* I find there is in the neighbourhood of this place a large canal, which was cut by a king of this country; but as it is left unfinished, it is uncertain whether it was for the purpose of draining the adjacent fields, or making a com-

* A Roman cubit is equal to 1 foot 5·406 inches of our measure Arbuthnot's Tab. *M.*

munication between the lake and the river. It is equally doubtful too whether the death of the king, or the despair of being able to accomplish the design, prevented the completion of it. If this was the reason, I am so much the more eager and warmly desirous, for the sake of your illustrious character (and I hope you will pardon me the ambition), that *you* may have the glory of executing what *kings* could only attempt.*

LETTER LI. Trajan *to* Pliny.

There is something in the scheme you propose of opening a communication between the lake and the sea, which may, perhaps, tempt me to consent. But you must first carefully examine the situation of this body of water, what quantity it contains, and from whence it is supplied; lest, by giving it an opening into the sea, it should be totally drained. You may apply to Calpurnius Macer for an engineer, and I will also send you from hence some one skilled in works of this nature.

LETTER LII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Upon examing into the public expenses of the city of Byzantium,† which, I find, are extremely great, I was informed, Sir, that the appointments of the ambassador whom they send yearly to you with their homage, and the decree which passes in the senate upon that occasion, amount to twelve thousand sesterces.‡ But knowing the generous maxims of your government, I thought proper to send the decree without the ambassador, that, at the same

* A commentator upon this passage thinks this a very extraordinary compliment; 'as if,' says he, 'an emperor of Rome could not do more than a little king of Bithynia.' But it is much more probable that this critic should be mistaken in his objection than Pliny in his compliment; and though he will have it to be a *little* king, it is more reasonable to suppose our author meant some great king of Persia. Besides, *imperator*, among the Romans, had not of itself any such high idea as has been affixed to it in later times. The meaning, therefore, of this wish seems to be that, though Trajan was contented to be in title no more than general (*imperator*), yet in acts of public munificence he might be more than those who proudly styled themselves kings. *M.*

† Constantinople. *M.* ‡ About £100.

time they discharged their public duty to you, their expense incurred in the manner of paying it might be lightened. This city is likewise taxed with the sum of three thousand sesterces * towards defraying the expense of an envoy, whom they annually send to compliment the governor of Moesia: this expense I have also directed to be spared. I beg, Sir, you would deign either to confirm my judgment or correct my error in these points, by acquainting me with your sentiments.

LETTER LIII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

I entirely approve, my dearest Secundus, of your having excused the Byzantines that expense of twelve thousand sesterces in sending an ambassador to me. I shall esteem their duty as sufficiently paid, though I only receive the act of their senate through your hands. The governor of Moesia must likewise excuse them if they compliment him at a less expense.

LETTER LIV. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

I beg, Sir, you would settle a doubt I have concerning your *diplomas*;† whether you think proper that those *diplomas* the dates of which are expired shall continue in force, and for how long? For I am apprehensive I may, through ignorance, either confirm such of these instruments as are illegal or prevent the effect of those which are necessary.

LETTER LV. Trajan *to* Pliny.

The diplomas whose dates are expired must by no means be made use of. For which reason it is an inviolable rule with me to send new instruments of this kind into all the provinces before they are immediately wanted.

* About £23.

† A diploma is properly a grant of certain privileges either to particular places or persons. It signifies also grants of other kinds; and it sometimes means post-warrants,[1] as, perhaps, it does in this place. *M.*

[1] See letter xxiv. of this book, in the notes.

LETTER LVI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Upon intimating, Sir, my intention to the city of Apamea,* of examining into the state of their public dues, their revenue and expenses, they told me they were all extremely willing I should inspect their accounts, but that no proconsul had ever yet looked them over, as they had a privilege (and that of a very ancient date) of administering the affairs of their corporation in the manner they thought proper. I required them to draw up a memorial of what they then asserted, which I transmit to you precisely as I received it; though I am sensible it contains several things foreign to the question. I beg you will deign to instruct me as to how I am to act in this affair, for I should be extremely sorry either to exceed or fall short of the duties of my commission.

LETTER LVII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

The memorial of the Apameans annexed to your letter has saved me the necessity of considering the reasons they suggest why the former proconsuls forbore to inspect their accounts, since they are willing to submit them to your examination. Their honest compliance deserves to be rewarded; and they may be assured the enquiry you are to make in pursuance of my orders shall be with a full reserve to their privileges.

LETTER LVIII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The Nicomedians, Sir, before my arrival in this province, had begun to build a new forum adjoining their former, in a corner of which stands an ancient temple dedicated to the *mother of the gods.*† This fabric must either be repaired or removed, and for this reason chiefly, because it is a much lower building than that very lofty one which is now in process of erection. Upon enquiry whether this

* A city in Bithynia. *M.*

† Cybele, Rhea, or Ops, as she is otherwise called; from whom, according to the pagan creed, the rest of the gods are supposed to have descended. *M.*

temple had been consecrated, I was informed that their ceremonies of dedication differ from ours. You will be pleased therefore, Sir, to consider whether a temple which has not been consecrated according to our rites may be removed,* consistently with the reverence due to religion: for, if there should be no objection from that quarter, the removal in every other respect would be extremely convenient.

LETTER LI TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You may without scruple, my dearest Secundus, if the situation requires it, remove the temple of the *mother of the gods*, from the place where it now stands, to any other spot more convenient. You need be under no difficulty with respect to the act of dedication; for the ground of a foreign city† is not capable of receiving that kind of consecration which is sanctified by our laws.

LETTER LX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

We have celebrated, Sir (with those sentiments of joy your virtues so justly merit), the day of your accession to the empire, which was also its preservation, imploring the gods to preserve you in health and prosperity; for upon your welfare the security and repose of the world depends. I renewed at the same time the oath of allegiance at the head of the army, which repeated it after me in the usual form, the people of the province zealously concurring in the same oath.

LETTER LXI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

Your letter, my dearest Secundus, was extremely acceptable, as it informed me of the zeal and affection with which you, together with the army and the provincials, solemnised the day of my accession to the empire.

* Whatever was legally consecrated was ever afterwards unapplicable to profane uses. *M.*

† That is, a city not admitted to enjoy the laws and privileges of Rome. *M.*

LETTER LXII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The debts which were owing to the public are, by the prudence, Sir, of your counsels, and the care of my administration, either actually paid in or now being collected: but I am afraid the money must lie unemployed. For as on one side there are few or no opportunities of purchasing land, so, on the other, one cannot meet with any person who is willing to borrow of the public* (especially at 12 per cent. interest) when they can raise money upon the same terms from private sources. You will consider then, Sir, whether it may not be advisable, in order to invite responsible persons to take this money, to lower the interest; or if that scheme should not succeed, to place it in the hands of the decurii, upon their giving sufficient security to the public. And though they should not be willing to receive it, yet as the rate of interest will be diminished, the hardship will be so much the less.

LETTER LXIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I agree with you, my dear Pliny, that there seems to be no other method of facilitating the placing out of the public money than by lowering the interest; the measure of which you will determine according to the number of the borrowers. But to compel persons to receive it who are not disposed to do so, when possibly they themselves may have no opportunity of employing it, is, by no means, consistent with the justice of my government.

LETTER LXIV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I return you my warmest acknowledgments, Sir, that, among the many important occupations in which you are

* The reason why they did not choose to borrow of the public at the same rate of interest which they paid to private persons was (as one of the commentators observes) because in the former instance they were obliged to give security, whereas in the latter they could raise money upon their personal credit. *M.*

engaged, you have condescended to be my guide on those points on which I have consulted you: a favour which I must now again beseech you to grant me. A certain person presented himself with a complaint that his adversaries, who had been banished for three years by the illustrious Servilius Calvus, still remained in the province: they, on the contrary, affirmed that Calvus had revoked their sentence, and produced his edict to that effect. I thought it necessary therefore to refer the whole affair to you. For as I have your express orders not to restore any person who has been sentenced to banishment either by myself or others, so I have no directions with respect to those who, having been banished by some of my predecessors in this government, have by them also been restored. It is necessary for me, therefore, to beg you would inform me, Sir, how I am to act with regard to the above-mentioned persons, as well as others, who, after having been condemned to perpetual banishment, have been found in the province without permission to return; for cases of that nature have likewise fallen under my cognisance. A person was brought before me who had been sentenced to perpetual exile by the proconsul Julius Bassus, but knowing that the acts of Bassus, during his administration, had been rescinded, and that the senate had granted leave to all those who had fallen under his condemnation of appealing from his decision at any time within the space of two years, I enquired of this man whether he had, accordingly, stated his case to the proconsul. He replied he had not. I beg then you would inform me whether you would have him sent back into exile, or whether you think some more severe and what kind of punishment should be inflicted upon him, and such others who may hereafter be found under the same circumstances. I have annexed to my letter the decree of Calvus, and the edict by which the persons above-mentioned were restored, as also the decree of Bassus.

LETTER LXV. Trajan *to* Pliny.

I will let you know my determination concerning those exiles which were banished for three years by the proconsul P. Servilius Calvus, and soon afterwards restored to the province by his edict, when I shall have informed myself from him of the reasons of this proceeding. With respect to that person who was sentenced to perpetual banishment by Julius Bassus, yet continued to remain in the province, without making his appeal if he thought himself aggrieved (though he had two years given him for that purpose), I would have him sent in chains to my praetorian prefects:* for, only to remand him back to a punishment which he has contumaciously eluded will by no means be a sufficient punishment.

LETTER LXVI. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

When I cited the judges, Sir, to attend me at a sessions† which I was going to hold, Flavius Archippus claimed the privilege of being excused, as exercising the profession of a philosopher.‡ It was alleged by some who were present that he ought not only to be excused from that office, but even struck out of the roll of judges, and remanded back to the punisnment from which he had escaped, by breaking his chains. At the same time a sentence of the proconsul Velius Paullus was read, by which it appeared that Archippus had been condemned to the mines for forgery. He had nothing to produce in proof of this sentence having ever been reversed. He alleged, however, in favour of his

* These, in the original institution as settled by Augustus, were only commanders of his body-guards; but in the later times of the Roman empire they were next in authority under the emperor, to whom they seem to have acted as a sort of prime ministers. *M.*

† The provinces were divided into a kind of circuits called *conventus*, whither the proconsuls used to go in order to administer justice. The judges here mentioned must not be understood to mean the same sort of judicial officers as with us; they rather answered to our juries. *M.*

‡ By the imperial constitutions the philosophers were exempted from all public functions. Catanaeus. *M.*

restitution, a petition which he presented to Domitian, together with a letter from that prince, and a decree of the Prusensians, in his honour. To these he subjoined a letter which he had received from you; as also an edict and a letter of your august father confirming the grants which had been made to him by Domitian. For these reasons, notwithstanding crimes of so atrocious a nature were laid to his charge, I did not think proper to determine anything concerning him, without first consulting with you, as it is an affair which seems to merit your particular decision. I have transmitted to you, with this letter, the several allegations on both sides.

DOMITIAN'S LETTER *to* TERENTIUS MAXIMUS.

'Flavius Archippus the philosopher has prevailed with me to give an order that six hundred thousand sesterces* be laid out in the purchase of an estate for the support of him and his family, in the neighbourhood of Prusias,† his native country. Let this be accordingly done; and place that sum to the account of my benefactions.'

From THE SAME *to* L. APPIUS MAXIMUS.

'I recommend, my dear Maximus, to your protection that worthy philosopher Archippus; a person whose moral conduct is agreeable to the principles of the philosophy he professes; and I would have you pay entire regard to whatever he shall reasonably request.'

THE EDICT OF THE EMPEROR NERVA.

'There are some points, no doubt, Quirites,‡ concerning which the happy tenour of my government is a sufficient

* About £4700.

† Geographers are not agreed where to place this city; Cellarius conjectures it may possibly be the same with Prusa ad Olympum, Prusa at the foot of Mount Olympus in Mysia, mentioned in letter lxxxv. of this book. *M.*

‡ A general appellation given to the Roman people *M.*

indication of my sentiments; and a good prince need not give an express declaration in matters wherein his intention cannot but be clearly understood. Every citizen in the empire will bear me witness that I gave up my private repose to the security of the public, and in order that I might have the pleasure of dispensing new bounties of my own, as also of confirming those which had been granted by predecessors. But lest the memory of him* who conferred these grants, or the diffidence of those who received them, should occasion any interruption to the public joy, I thought it as necessary as it is agreeable to me to obviate these suspicions by assuring them of my indulgence. I do not wish any man who has obtained a private or a public privilege from one of the former emperors to imagine he is to be deprived of such a privilege, merely that he may owe the restoration of it to me; nor need any who have received the gratifications of imperial favour petition me to have them confirmed. Rather let them leave me at leisure for conferring new grants, under the assurance that I am only to be solicited for those bounties which have not already been obtained, and which the happier fortune of the empire has put it in my power to bestow.'

From THE SAME *to* TULLIUS JUSTUS.

'Since I have publicly decreed that all acts begun and accomplished in former reigns should be confirmed, the letters of Domitian must remain valid.'

LETTER LXVII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Flavius Archippus has conjured me, by all my vows for your prosperity, and by your immortal glory, that I would transmit to you the memorial which he presented to me. I could not refuse a request couched in *such* terms; however, I acquainted the prosecutrix with this my intention, from whom I have also received a memorial on her part.

* Domitian.

I have annexed them both to this letter; that by hearing, as it were, each party, you may the better be enabled to decide.

LETTER LXVIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

It is possible that Domitian might have been ignorant of the circumstances in which Archippus was when he wrote the letter so much to that philosopher's credit. However, it is more agreeable to my disposition to suppose that prince designed he should be restored to his former situation; especially since he so often had the honour of a statue decreed to him by those who could not be ignorant* of the sentence pronounced against him by the proconsul Paullus. But I do not mean to intimate, my dear Pliny, that if any new charge should be brought against him, you should be the less disposed to hear his accusers. I have examined the memorial of his prosecutrix, Furia Prima, as well as that of Archippus himself, which you sent with your last letter.

LETTER LXIX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The apprehensions† you express, Sir, that the lake will be in danger of being entirely drained if a communication should be opened between that and the sea, by means of the river, are agreeable to that prudence and forethought you so eminently possess; but I think I have found a method to obviate that inconvenience. A channel may be cut from the lake up to the river so as not quite to join them, leaving just a narrow strip of land between, preserving the lake; by this means it will not only be kept quite separate from the river, but all the same purposes

* In the text of all the editions it is '*qui ignorabant*,' but the reasoning seems to require the negative particle;[1] though the commentators have passed over the passage without objection. *M.*

† See letters l. and li. of this book. *M.*

[1] In Keil's text the negative particle is conjecturally inserted.

will be answered as if they were united: for it will be extremely easy to convey over that little intervening ridge whatever goods shall be brought down by the canal. This is a scheme which may be pursued, if it should be found necessary; but I hope there will be no occasion to have recourse to it. For, in the first place, the lake itself is pretty deep; and in the next, by damming up a river, which runs from it on the opposite side, and turning its course as we shall find expedient, the same quantity of water may be retained. Besides, there are several brooks near the place where it is proposed the channel shall be cut which, if skilfully collected, will supply the lake with water in proportion to what it shall discharge. But if you should rather approve of the channel's being extended farther and cut narrower, and so conveyed directly into the sea, without running into the river, the reflux of the tide will return whatever it receives from the lake. After all, if the nature of the place should not admit of any of these schemes, the course of the water may be checked by sluices. These, however, and many other particulars, will be more skilfully examined into by the engineer, whom, indeed, Sir, you ought to send, according to your promise, for it is an enterprise well worthy of your attention and magnificence. In the meanwhile, I have written to the illustrious Calpurnius Macer, in pursuance of your orders, to send me the most skilful engineer to be had.

LETTER LXX. Trajan *to* Pliny.

It is evident, my dearest Secundus, that neither your prudence nor your care has been wanting in this affair of the lake, since, in order to render it of more general benefit, you have provided so many expedients against the danger of its being drained. I leave it to your own choice to pursue whichever of the schemes shall be thought most proper. Calpurnius Macer will furnish you, no doubt, with an engineer, as artificers of that kind are not wanting in his province.

LETTER LXXI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

A very considerable question, Sir, in which the whole province is interested, has been lately started, concerning the state* and maintenance of deserted children.† I have examined the constitutions of former princes upon this head, but not finding anything in them relating, either in general or particular, to the Bithynians, I thought it necessary to apply to you for your directions: for in a point which seems to require the special interposition of your authority, I could not content myself with following precedents. An edict of the emperor Augustus (as pretended) was read to me, concerning one Annia; as also a letter from Vespasian to the Lacedaemonians, and another from Titus to the same, with one likewise from him to the Achaeans, also some letters from Domitian, directed to the proconsuls Avidius Nigrinus and Armenius Brocchus, together with one from that prince to the Lacedaemonians: but I have not transmitted them to you, as they were not correct (and some of them too of doubtful authenticity), and also because I imagine the true copies are preserved in your archives.

LETTER LXXII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

The question concerning children who were exposed by their parents, and afterwards preserved by others, and educated in a state of servitude, though born free, has been frequently discussed; but I do not find in the constitutions of the princes my predecessors any general regulation upon this head, extending to all the provinces. There are, indeed, some rescripts of Domitian to Avidius

* That is, whether they should be considered in a state of freedom or slavery. *M.*

† 'Parents throughout the entire ancient world had the right to expose their children and leave them to their fate. Hence would sometimes arise the question whether such a child, if found and brought up by another, was entitled to his freedom, whether also the person thus adopting him must grant him his freedom without repayment for the cost of maintenance.' Church and Brodribb.

Nigrinus and Armenius Brocchus, which ought to be observed; but Bithynia is not comprehended in the provinces therein mentioned. I am of opinion therefore that the claims of those who assert their right of freedom upon this footing should be allowed; without obliging them to purchase their liberty by repaying the money advanced for their maintenance.*

LETTER LXXIII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Having been petitioned by some persons to grant them the liberty (agreeably to the practice of former proconsuls) of removing the relics of their deceased relations, upon the suggestion that either their monuments were decayed by age or ruined by the inundations of the river, or for other reasons of the same kind, I thought proper, Sir, knowing that in cases of this nature it is usual at Rome to apply to the college of priests, to consult you, who are the sovereign of that sacred order, as to how you would have me act in this case.

LETTER LXXIV. Trajan *to* Pliny.

It will be a hardship upon the provincials to oblige them to address themselves to the college of priests whenever they may have just reasons for removing the ashes of their ancestors. In this case, therefore, it will be better you should follow the example of the governors your predecessors, and grant or deny them this liberty as you shall see reasonable.

* 'This decision of Trajan, the effect of which would be that persons would be slow to adopt an abandoned child which, when brought up, its unnatural parents could claim back without any compensation for its nurture, seems harsh, and we find that it was disregarded by the later emperors in their legal decisions on the subject.' Church and Brodribb.

LETTER LXXV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I have enquired, Sir, at Prusa, for a proper place on which to erect the bath you were pleased to allow that city to build, and I have found one to my satisfaction. It is upon the site where formerly, I am told, stood a very beautiful mansion, but which is now entirely fallen into ruins. By fixing upon that spot, we shall gain the advantage of ornamenting the city in a part which at present is exceedingly deformed, and enlarging it at the same time without removing any of the buildings; only restoring one which is fallen to decay. There are some circumstances attending this structure of which it is proper I should inform you. Claudius Polyaenus bequeathed it to the emperor Claudius Caesar, with directions that a temple should be erected to that prince in a colonnade-court, and that the remainder of the house should be let in apartments. The city received the rents for a considerable time; but partly by its having been plundered, and partly by its being neglected, the whole house, colonnade-court, and all, is entirely gone to ruin, and there is now scarcely anything remaining of it but the ground upon which it stood. If you shall think proper, Sir, either to give or sell this spot of ground to the city, as it lies so conveniently for their purpose, they will receive it as a most particular favour. I intend, with your permission, to place the bath in the vacant area, and to extend a range of porticoes with seats in that part where the former edifice stood. This new erection I purpose dedicating to you, by whose bounty it will rise with all the elegance and magnificence worthy of your glorious name. I have sent you a copy of the will, by which, though it is inaccurate, you will see that Polyaenus left several articles of ornament for the embellishment of this house; but these also are lost with all the rest: I will, however, make the strictest enquiry after them that I am able.

LETTER LXXVI. Trajan *to* Pliny.

I have no objection to the Prusenses making use of the ruined court and house, which you say are untenanted, for the erection of their bath. But it is not sufficiently clear by your letter whether the temple in the centre of the colonnade-court was actually dedicated to Claudius or not; for if it were, it is still consecrated ground.*

LETTER LXXVII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

I have been pressed by some persons to take upon myself the enquiry of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right, agreeably to a rescript of Domitian's to Minucius Rufus, and the practice of former proconsuls. But upon casting my eye on the decree of the senate concerning cases of this nature, I find it only mentions the proconsular provinces.† I have therefore, Sir, deferred interfering in this affair, till I shall receive your instructions as to how you would have me proceed.

LETTER LXXVIII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

If you will send me the decree of the senate, which occasioned your doubt, I shall be able to judge whether it is proper you should take upon yourself the enquiry of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right.

* And consequently by the Roman laws unapplicable to any other purpose. *M.*

† The Roman provinces in the times of the emperors were of two sorts: those which were distinguished by the name of the *provinciae Caesaris* and the *provinciae senatus*. The *provinciae Caesaris*, or imperial provinces, were such as the emperor, for reasons of policy, reserved to his own immediate administration, or of those whom he thought proper to appoint: the *provinciae senatus*, or proconsular provinces, were such as he left to the government of proconsuls or praetors, chosen in the ordinary method of election. (Vid. Suet. in Aug. c. 47.) Of the former kind was Bithynia, at the time when our author presided there. (Vid. Masson. Vit. Plin. p. 133.) *M.*

LETTER LXXIX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Julius Largus, of Pontus * (a person whom I never saw, nor indeed ever heard his name till lately), in confidence, Sir, of your distinguishing judgment in my favour, has entrusted me with the execution of the last instance of his loyalty towards you. He has left me, by his will, his estate upon trust, in the first place to receive out of it fifty thousand sesterces † for my own use, and to apply the remainder for the benefit of the cities of Heraclea and Tios, ‡ either by erecting some public edifice dedicated to your honour or instituting athletic games, according as I shall judge proper. These games are to be celebrated every five years, and to be called *Trajan's games.* My principal reason for acquainting you with this bequest is that I may receive your directions which of the respective alternatives to choose.

LETTER LXXX. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

By the prudent choice Julius Largus has made of a trustee, one would imagine he had known you perfectly well. You will consider then what will most tend to perpetuate his memory, under the circumstances of the respective cities, and make your option accordingly.

LETTER LXXXI *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

You acted agreeably, Sir, to your usual prudence and foresight in ordering the illustrious Calpurnius Macer to send a legionary centurion to Byzantium: you will consider whether the city of Juliopolis § does not deserve the

* A province in Asia, bordering upon the Black Sea, and by some ancient geographers considered as one province with Bithynia. *M.*

† About £400. *M.*

‡ Cities of Pontus near the Euxine or Black Sea. *M.*

§ Gordium, the old capital of Phrygia. It afterwards, in the reign of the emperor Augustus, received the name of Juliopolis. (See Smith's Classical Dict.)

same regard, which, though it is extremely small, sustains very great burthens, and is so much the more exposed to injuries as it is less capable of resisting them. Whatever benefits you shall confer upon that city will in effect be advantageous to the whole country: for it is situated at the entrance of Bithynia, and is the town through which all who travel into this province generally pass.

LETTER LXXXII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

The circumstances of the city of Byzantium are such, by the great confluence of strangers to it, that I held it incumbent upon me, and consistent with the customs of former reigns, to send thither a legionary centurion's guard to preserve the privileges of that state. But if we should distinguish the city of Juliopolis in the same way, it will be introducing a precedent for many others, whose claim to that favour will rise in proportion to their want of strength. I have so much confidence, however, in your administration as to believe you will omit no method of protecting them from injuries. If any persons shall act contrary to the discipline I have enjoined, let them be instantly corrected; or if they happen to be soldiers, and their crimes should be too enormous for immediate chastisement, I would have them sent to their officers, with an account of the particular misdemeanour you shall find they have been guilty of; but if the delinquents should be on their way to Rome, inform me by letter.

LETTER LXXXIII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

By a law of Pompey's * concerning the Bithynians, it is enacted, Sir, that no person shall be a magistrate, or be chosen into the senate, under the age of thirty. By the same law it is declared that those who have exercised the

* Pompey the Great having subdued Mithridates, and by that means greatly enlarged the Roman empire, passed several laws relating to the newly conquered provinces, and, among others, that which is here mentioned; as Catanaeus observes from Appian. *M.*

office of magistrate are qualified to be members of the senate. Subsequent to this law, the emperor Augustus published an edict, by which it was ordained that persons of the age of twenty-two should be capable of being magistrates. The question therefore is whether those who have exercised the functions of a magistrate before the age of thirty may be legally chosen into the senate by the censors?* And if so, whether, by the same kind of construction, they may be elected senators, at the age which entitles them to be magistrates, though they should not actually have borne any office? A custom which, it seems, has hitherto been observed, and is said to be expedient, as it is rather better that persons of noble birth should be admitted into the senate than those of plebeian rank. The censors elect having desired my sentiments upon this point, I was of opinion that both by the law of Pompey and the edict of Augustus those who had exercised the magistracy before the age of thirty might be chosen into the senate; and for this reason, because the edict allows the office of magistrate to be undertaken before thirty; and the laws declares that whoever has been a magistrate should be eligible for the senate. But with respect to those who never discharged any office in the state, though they were of the age required for that purpose, I had some doubt: and therefore, Sir, I apply to you for your directions. I have subjoined to this letter the heads of the law, together with the edict of Augustus.

LETTER LXXXIV. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I agree with you, my dearest Secundus, in your construction, and am of opinion that the law of Pompey is so far repealed by the edict of the emperor Augustus that those persons who are not less than twenty-two years of age may execute the office of magistrates, and, when they have, may be received into the senate of their respective

* The right of electing senators did not originally belong to the censors, who were only, as Cicero somewhere calls them, *guardians of the discipline and manners of the city*; but in process of time they engrossed the whole privilege of conferring that honour. *M.*

cities. But I think that they who are under thirty years of age, and have not discharged the function of a magistrate, cannot, upon pretence that in point of years they were competent to the office, legally be elected into the senate of their several communities.

LETTER LXXXV. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Whilst I was despatching some public affairs, Sir, at my apartments in Prusa,* at the foot of Olympus, with the intention of leaving that city the same day, the magistrate Asclepiades informed me that Eumolpus had appealed to me from a motion which Cocceianus Dion made in their senate. Dion, it seems, having been appointed supervisor of a public building, desired that it might be assigned † to the city in form. Eumolpus, who was counsel for Flavius Archippus, insisted that Dion should first be required to deliver in his accounts relating to this work, before it was assigned to the corporation; suggesting that he had not acted in the manner he ought. He added, at the same time, that in this building, in which your statue is erected, the bodies of Dion's wife and son are entombed, ‡ and urged me to hear this cause in the public court of judicature. Upon my at once assenting to his request, and deferring my journey for that purpose, he desired a longer day in order to prepare matters for hearing, and that I would try this cause in some other city. I appointed the city of Nicea; where, when I had taken my seat, the same Eumolpus, pretending not to be yet sufficiently instructed, moved that the trial might be again put off: Dion, on the contrary, insisted it should be heard. They debated this

* See letter xvi. note ‡.

† This, probably, was some act whereby the city was to ratify and confirm the proceedings of Dion under the commission assigned to him.

‡ It was a notion which generally prevailed with the ancients, in the Jewish as well as heathen world, that there was a pollution in the contact of dead bodies, and this they extended to the very house in which the corpse lay, and even to the uncovered vessels that stood in the same room. (Vid. Pot. Antiq. v. ii. 181.) From some such opinion as this it is probable that the circumstance here mentioned, of placing Trajan's statue where these bodies were deposited, was esteemed as a mark of disrespect to his person.

point very fully on both sides, and entered a little into the merits of the cause; when being of opinion that it was reasonable it should be adjourned, and thinking it proper to consult with you in an affair which was of consequence in point of precedent, I directed them to exhibit the articles of their respective allegations in writing; for I was desirous you should judge from their own representations of the state of the question between them. Dion promised to comply with this direction, and Eumolpus also assured me he would draw up a memorial of what he had to allege on the part of the community. But he added that, being only concerned as advocate on behalf of Archippus, whose instructions he had laid before me, he had no charge to bring with respect to the supulchres. Archippus, however, for whom Eumolpus was counsel here, as at Prusa, assured me he would himself present a charge in form upon this head. But neither Eumolpus nor Archippus (though I have waited several days for that purpose) have yet performed their engagement: Dion indeed has; and I have annexed his memorial to this letter. I have inspected the buildings in question, where I find your statue is placed in a library and as to the edifice in which the bodies of Dion's wife and son are said to be deposited, it stands in the middle of a court, which is enclosed with a colonnade. Deign, therefore, I entreat you, Sir, to direct my judgment in the determination of this cause above all others, as it is a point to which the public is greatly attentive, and necessarily so, since the fact is not only acknowledged, but countenanced by many precedents.

LETTER LXXXVI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You well know, my dearest Secundus, that it is my standing maxim not to create an awe of my person by severe and rigorous measures, and by construing every slight offence into an act of treason; you had no reason, therefore, to hesitate a moment upon the point concerning which you thought proper to consult me. Without entering therefore into the merits of that question (to which I would by no means give any attention, though there were ever so many instances of the same kind), I recommend to

your care the examination of Dion's accounts relating to the public works which he has finished; as it is a case in which the interest of the city is concerned, and as Dion neither ought nor, it seems, does refuse to submit to the examination.

LETTER LXXXVII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

The Niceans having, in the name of their community, conjured me, Sir, by all my hopes and wishes for your prosperity and immortal glory (an adjuration which is and ought to be most sacred to me), to present to you their petition, I did not think myself at liberty to refuse them: I have therefore annexed it to this letter.

LETTER LXXXVIII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

The Niceans, I find, claim a right, by an edict of Augustus, to the estate of every citizen who dies intestate. You will therefore summon the several parties interested in this question, and, examining these pretensions, with the assistance of the procurators Virdius Gemellinus, and Epimachus, my freedman (having duly weighed every argument that shall be alleged against the claim), determine as shall appear most equitable.

LETTER LXXXIX. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

May this and many succeeding birthdays be attended, Sir, with the highest felicity to you; and may you, in the midst of an uninterrupted course of health and prosperity, be still adding to the increase of that immortal glory which your virtues justly merit!

LETTER XC. Trajan *to* Pliny.

Your wishes, my dearest Secundus, for my enjoyment of many happy birthdays amidst the glory and prosperity of the republic were extremely agreeable to me.

LETTER XCI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The inhabitants of Sinope * are ill supplied, Sir, with with water, which however may be brought thither from about sixteen miles' distance in great plenty and perfection. The ground, indeed, near the source of this spring is, for rather over a mile, of a very suspicious and marshy nature: but I have directed an examination to be made (which will be effected at a small expense) whether it is sufficiently firm to support any superstructure. I have taken care to provide a sufficient fund for this purpose, if you should approve, Sir, of a work so conducive to the health and enjoyment of this colony, greatly distressed by a scarcity of water.

LETTER XCII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I would have you proceed, my dearest Secundus, in carefully examining whether the ground you suspect is firm enough to support an aqueduct. For I have no manner of doubt that the Sinopian colony ought to be supplied with water; provided their finances will bear the expense of a work so conducive to their health and pleasure.

LETTER XCIII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The free and confederate city of the Amiseni † enjoys, by your indulgence, the privilege of its own laws. A memorial being presented to me there, concerning a charitable institution,‡ I have subjoined it to this letter, that

* A thriving Greek colony in the territory of Sinopis, on the Euxine.

† A colony of Athenians in the province of Pontus. Their town, Amisus, on the coast, was one of the residences of Mithridates.

‡ Causabon, in his observations upon Theophrastus (as cited by one of the commentators), informs us that there were at Athens and other cities of Greece certain fraternities which paid into a common chest a monthly contribution towards the support of such of their members who had fallen into misfortunes; upon condition that, if ever they arrived to more prosperous circumstances, they should repay into the general fund the money so advanced. *M.*

you may consider, Sir, whether, and how far, this society ought to be licensed or prohibited.

LETTER XCIV. Trajan *to* Pliny.

If the petition of the Amiseni which you have transmitted to me, concerning the establishment of a charitable society, be agreeable to their own laws, which by the articles of alliance it is stipulated they shall enjoy, I shall not oppose it; especially if these contributions are employed, not for the purposes of riot and faction, but for the support of the indigent. In other cities, however, which are subject to our laws, I would have all assemblies of this nature prohibited.

LETTER XCV. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

Suetonius Tranquillus, Sir, is a most excellent, honourable, and learned man. I was so much pleased with his tastes and disposition that I have long since invited him into my family, as my constant guest and domestic friend; and my affection for him increased the more I knew of him. Two reasons concur to render the privilege * which the

* By the law for encouragement of matrimony (some account of which has already been given in the notes above), as a penalty upon those who lived bachelors, they were declared incapable of inheriting any legacy by will; so likewise, if being married, they had no children, they could not claim the full advantage of benefactions of that kind.[1] Thus Naevolus, in Juvenal, very humorously urges his gallantries in his friend's family, as a meritorious piece of service which he had done him.

> 'Nullum ergo meritum est, ingrate ac perfide, nullum,
> Quod tibi filiolus, vel filia nascitur ex me?—
> Jura parentis habes; propter me scriberis heres;
> Legatum omne capis, necnon et dulce caducum.'

> 'And ow'st thou nothing then, ingrate! to me,
> That from my loins you sons and daughters see?
> A parent's privilege by *me* you gain,
> And the rich legacy in *full* obtain.'

Pliny therefore alludes to this law when he mentions the bounties of

[1] Lipsi Excurs. in Tac. An. iii. c. 24.

law grants to those who have three children particularly necessary to him; I mean the bounty of his friends, and the ill-success of his marriage. Those advantages, therefore, which nature has denied to him, he hopes to obtain from your goodness, by my intercession. I am thoroughly sensible, Sir, of the value of the privilege I am asking; but I know, too, I am asking it from one whose gracious compliance with all my desires I have amply experienced. How passionately I wish to do so in the present instance, you will judge by my thus requesting it in my absence; which I would not, had it not been a favour which I am more than ordinarily anxious to obtain.

LETTER XCVI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You cannot but be sensible, my dearest Secundus, how reserved I am in granting favours of the kind you desire; having frequently declared in the senate that I had not exceeded the number of which I assured that illustrious order I would be contented with. I have yielded, however, to your request, and have directed an article to be inserted in my register, that I have conferred upon Tranquillus, on my usual conditions, the privilege which the law grants to these who have three children.

LETTER XCVII.* *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is my invariable rule, Sir, to refer to you in all matters where I feel doubtful; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance?

Tranquillus's deceased friends, as one reason why it was expedient for him to obtain the *jus trium liberorum*, viz. in order to entitle him to the full benefit of their several bequests. *M.*

* This letter is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the Apostles, it being written at most not above forty years after the death of St. Paul. It was preserved by the Christians themselves as a clear and unsuspicious evidence of the purity of their doctrines, and is frequently appealed to by the early writers of the Church against the calumnies of their adversaries. *M.*

Having never been present at any trials concerning those who profess Christianity, I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to ages, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession are punishable; on all these points I am in great doubt. In the meanwhile, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians is this: I asked them whether they were Christians; if they admitted it, I repeated the question twice, and threatened them with punishment; if they persisted, I ordered them to be at once punished: for I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation, but being Roman citizens,* I directed them to be sent to Rome. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An anonymous information was laid before me, containing a charge against several persons, who upon examination denied they were Christians, or had ever been so. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and incense before your statue (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods), and even reviled the name of Christ: whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians into any of these compliances: I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person at first confessed

* It was one of the privileges of a Roman citizen, secured by the Sempronian law, that he could not be capitally convicted but by the suffrage of the people; which seems to have been still so far in force as to make it necessary to send the persons here mentioned to Rome. *M*

themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it: the rest owned indeed that they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and a few above twenty years ago) renounced that error. They all worshipped your statue and the images of the gods, uttering imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a stated day before it was light, and addressed a form of prayer to Christ, as to a divinity, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. After receiving this account, I judged it so much the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to officiate* in their religious rites: but all I could discover was evidence of an absurd and extravagant superstition. I deemed it expedient, therefore, to adjourn all further proceedings, in order to consult you. For it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration, more especially as great numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, which have already extended, and are still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. In fact, this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighbouring villages and country. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred rites, after a long intermission, are again re-

* These women, it is supposed, exercised the same office as Phoebe mentioned by St. Paul, whom he styles deaconess of the church of Cenchrea. Their business was to tend the poor and sick, and other charitable offices; as also to assist at the ceremony of female baptism, for the more decent performance of that rite: as Vossius observes upon this passage. *M.*

vived; while there is a general demand for the victims, which till lately found very few purchasers. From all this it is easy to conjecture what numbers might be reclaimed if a general pardon were granted to those who shall repent of their error.

LETTER XCVIII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

You have adopted the right course, my dearest Secundus in investigating the charges against the Christians who were brought before you. It is not possible to lay down any general rule for all such cases. Do not go out of your way to look for them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime is proved, they must be punished;*

* If we impartially examine this prosecution of the Christians, we shall find it to have been grounded on the ancient constitution of the state, and not to have proceeded from a cruel or arbitrary temper in Trajan. The Roman legislature appears to have been early jealous of any innovation in point of public worship; and we find the magistrates, during the old republic, frequently interposing in cases of that nature. Valerius Maximus has collected some instances to that purpose (L. i. c. 3), and Livy mentions it as an established principle of the earlier ages of the commonwealth, to guard against the introduction of foreign ceremonies of religion. '*Quoties*' (says that excellent historian, speaking in the person of one of the consuls who is addressing himself to the people) '*quoties hoc patrum avorumque aetate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent? Judica ant enim prudentissimi viri—nihil aeque dissolvendae religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio, sed externo ritu sacrificaretur.*' (L. xxxix. c. 16.) It was an old and fixed maxim likewise of the Roman government not to suffer any unlicensed assemblies of the people; and of this Livy also is a voucher: '*Majores vestri*' (says he) '*ne vos quidem nisi quum*,' &c.; '*forte temere coire noluerunt; et ubicunque multitudo esset, ibi et legitimum rectorem multitudinis censebant debere esse.*' (L. xxxvi. c. 25.) From hence it seems evident that the Christians had rendered themselves obnoxious not so much to Trajan as to the *ancient* and *settled* laws of the state, by introducing a foreign worship, and assembling themselves without authority. *M.*

We are not therefore to judge of the proceedings in question by the rules we should apply to cases of the same nature in our own times. The established religion of the Romans was no other, in the judgment and confession of their best writers, than an engine of state, which could not be shaken without the utmost danger, or rather, perhaps, without the total subversion of their civil government. Accordingly, we find them strongly inculcating a tenacious observance of all its

with the restriction, however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Anonymous informations ought not to be received in any sort of prosecution. It is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and is quite foreign to the spirit of our age.

LETTER XCIX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The elegant and beautiful city of Amastris,* Sir, has, among other principal constructions, a very fine street and of considerable length, on one entire side of which runs what is called indeed a river, but in fact is no other than a vile common sewer, extremely offensive to the eye, and at the same time very pestilential on account of its noxious smell. It will be advantageous, therefore, in point of health, as well as decency, to have it covered; which shall

rites: '*Majorum instituta tueri*' (says Cicero) '*sacris caeremoniisque retinendis, sapientis est*' (De Leg.). Nor is this principle, if the observation of the celebrated Machiavel is just, peculiar to the Roman state, but of universal truth in politics; for he lays it down as a general maxim, that, 'wherever the religion of any state falls into disregard and contempt, it is impossible for that state to subsist long' (Mach. Discorsi sopra tit. Liv.). This case therefore is to be considered in a civil, not a religious view; as a matter of state, not of speculation; wherein the lenity and moderation both of the emperor and his minister deserve to be applauded, as they are neither of them for pushing the matter as far as they most certainly might, had they acted strictly up to the *ancient* and *fundamental* laws of their country. *M.*

The circumstance that attended the Christian assemblies being held at an unusual hour ('*ante lucem*,' as Pliny tells us) seems to have raised a surmise that they were of the Bacchanalian kind. For it is extremely observable that in the account which the Christians here give of the true design of their meeting they justify themselves from the very crimes with which the Bacchanalians had been charged; intimating, it should seem, that they themselves had been taxed with the same: '*se sacramento non ad scelus aliquod obstringere; sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent*,' &c., which runs exactly parallel with the accusation against the Bacchanalians, as it stands in Livy: '*Nec unum genus noxae, stupra promiscua*,' &c., '*sed falsi testes, falsa signa testimoniaque et indicia ex eadem officina exibant*' (Liv. l. xxxix. c. 8). *M.*

* On the coast of Paphlagonia.

be done with your permission: as I will take care, on my part, that money be not wanting for executing so noble and necessary a work.

LETTER C. Trajan *to* Pliny.

It is highly reasonable, my dearest Secundus, if the water which runs through the city of Amastris is prejudicial, while uncovered, to the health of the inhabitants, that it should be covered up. I am well assured you will, with your usual application, take care that the money necessary for this work shall not be wanting.

LETTER CI. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

We have celebrated, Sir, with great joy and festivity, those votive solemnities which were publicly proclaimed as formerly, and renewed them the present year, accompanied by the soldiers and provincials, who zealously joined with us in imploring the gods that they would be graciously pleased to preserve you and the republic in that state of prosperity which your many and great virtues, particularly your piety and reverence towards them, so justly merit.

LETTER CII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

It was agreeable to me to learn by your letter that the army and the provincials seconded you, with the most joyful unanimity, in those vows which you paid and renewed to the immortal gods for my preservation and prosperity.

LETTER CIII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

We have celebrated, with all the warmth of that pious zeal we justly ought, the day on which, by a most happy succession, the protection of mankind was committed over

into your hands; recommending to the gods, from whom you received the empire, the object of your public vows and congratulations.

LETTER CIV. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I was extremely well pleased to be informed by your letter that you had, at the head of the soldiers and the provincials, solemnised my accession to the empire with all due joy and zeal.

LETTER CV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

Valerius Paulinus, Sir, having bequeathed to me the right of patronage* over all his freedmen, except one, I intreat you to grant the freedom of Rome to three of them. To desire you to extend this favour to all of them would, I fear, be too unreasonable a trespass upon your indulgence; which, in proportion as I have amply experienced, I ought to be so much the more cautious in troubling. The persons for whom I make this request are C. Valerius Astraeus, C. Valerius Dionysius, and C. Valerius Aper.

LETTER CVI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You act most generously in so early soliciting in favour of those whom Valerius Paulinus has confided to your trust. I have accordingly granted the freedom of the city to such of his freedmen for whom you requested it, and have directed the patent to be registered: I am ready to confer the same on the rest, whenever you shall desire me.

* By the Papian law, which passed in the consulship of M. Papius Mutilus and Q. Poppeas Secundus, U.C. 761, if a freedman died worth a hundred thousand sesterces (or about £800 of our money), leaving only one child, his patron (that is, the master from whom he received his liberty) was entitled to half his estate; if he left two children, to one-third; but if more than two, then the patron was absolutely excluded. This was afterwards altered by Justinian, Inst. l. iii. tit. 8. *M.*

LETTER CVII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

P. Attius Aquila, a centurion of the sixth equestrian cohort, requested me, Sir, to transmit his petition to you, in favour of his daughter. I thought it would be unkind to refuse him this service, knowing, as I do, with what patience and kindness you attend to the petitions of the soldiers.

LETTER CVIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I have read the petition of P. Attius Aquila, centurion of the sixth equestrian cohort, which you sent to me; and in compliance with his request, I have conferred upon his daughter the freedom of the city of Rome. I send you at the same time the patent, which you will deliver to him.

LETTER CIX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I request, Sir, your directions with respect to the recovering those debts which are due to the cities of Bithynia and Pontus, either for rent, or goods sold, or upon any other consideration. I find they have a privilege conceded to them by several proconsuls, of being preferred to other creditors; and this custom has prevailed as if it had been established by law. Your prudence, I imagine, will think it necessary to enact some settled rule, by which their rights may always be secured. For the edicts of others, how wisely soever founded, are but feeble and temporary ordinances, unless confirmed and sanctioned by your authority.

LETTER CX. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

The right which the cities either of Pontus or Bithynia claim relating to the recovery of debts of whatever kind,

due to their several communities, must be determined agreeably to their respective laws. Where any of these communities enjoy the privilege of being preferred to other creditors, it must be maintained; but, where no such privilege prevails, it is not just I should establish one, in prejudice of private property.

LETTER CXI. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The solicitor to the treasury of the city of Amisis instituted a claim, Sir, before me against Julius Piso of about forty thousand denarii,* presented to him by the public above twenty years ago, with the consent of the general council and assembly of the city: and he founded his demand upon certain of your edicts, by which donations of this kind are prohibited. Piso, on the other hand, asserted that he had conferred large sums of money upon the community, and, indeed, had thereby expended almost the whole of his estate. He insisted upon the length of time which had intervened since this donation, and hoped that he should not be compelled, to the ruin of the remainder of his fortunes,† to refund a present which had been granted him long since, in return for many good offices he had done the city. For this reason, Sir, I thought it

* About £1400.

† The translator has ventured to give this sense to *reliquae dignitatis*. It is, he confesses, a very uncommon, perhaps the single, instance of the word *dignitas* being used in that meaning; still, however, the context, together with the epithet which is joined with it, will, he imagines, clearly justify him. There is nothing in the nature of this case to make it reasonable to suppose that the dignity of Julius Piso should be impeached: as little is it to be collected from anything contained in this letter, or Trajan's answer. The adjective *reliqua* being added to *dignitas* removes every suspicion of its signifying *honour* (as the ingenious French translator, Mons. de Sacey, and his humble copier, the Italian Tedeschi, have rendered it). for honour scarce admits of fractions, and there can be no remainder after a subtraction of that kind. The truth, it should seem, is that, as the value of a man's estate was, among the Romans, a necessary qualification to render him capable of the dignities of the commonwealth, our author, by a figure of speech, puts *dignitas* for *facultas*; the consequent (to speak in the language of the grammarians) for the antecedent. *M.*

necessary to suspend giving any judgment in this cause till I shall receive your directions.

LETTER CXII. Trajan *to* Pliny.

Though by my edicts I have ordained that no largesses shall be given out of the public money, yet, that numberless private persons may not be disturbed in the secure possession of their fortunes, those donations which have been made long since ought not to be called in question or revoked. We will not therefore enquire into anything that has been transacted in this affair so long ago as twenty years; for I would be no less attentive to secure the repose of every private man than to preserve the treasure of every public community.

LETTER CXIII. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

The Pompeian law, Sir, which is observed in Pontus and Bithynia, does not direct that any money for their admission shall be paid in by those who are elected into the senate by the censors. It has, however, been usual for such members as have been admitted into those assemblies, in pursuance of the privilege which you were pleased to grant to some particular cities, of receiving above their legal number, to pay one * or two thousand denarii † on their election. Subsequent to this, the proconsul Anicius Maximus ordained (though indeed his edict related to some few cities only) that those who were elected by the censors should also pay into the treasury a certain sum, which varied in different places. It remains, therefore, for your consideration whether it would not be proper to settle a certain fixed sum for each member who is elected into the councils to pay upon his entrance; for it well becomes you, whose every word and action deserves to be immortalised, to establish laws that shall endure for ever.

* About £35. † About £70.

LETTER CXIV. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

I can give no general directions applicable to all the cities of Bithynia, in relation to those who are elected members of their respective councils, whether they shall pay an honorary fee upon their admittance or not. I think that the safest method which can be pursued is to follow the particular laws of each city; and I also think that the censors ought to make the sum less for those who are chosen into the senate contrary to their inclinations than for the rest.

LETTER CXV. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The Pompeian law, Sir, allows the Bithynians to give the freedom of their respective cities to any person they think proper, provided he is not a foreigner, but native of some of the cities of this province. The same law specifies the particular causes for which the censors may expel any member the senate, but makes no mention of foreigners. Certain of the censors therefore have desired my opinion whether they ought to expel a member if he should happen to be a foreigner. But I thought it necessary to receive your instructions in this case; not only because the law, though it forbids foreigners to be admitted citizens, does not direct that a senator shall be expelled for the same reason, but because I am informed that in every city in the province a great number of the senators are foreigners. If, therefore, this clause of the law, which seems to be antiquated by a long custom to the contrary, should be enforced, many cities, as well as private persons, must be injured by it. I have annexed the heads of this law to my letter.

LETTER CXVI. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You might well be doubtful, my dearest Secundus, what reply to give to the censors, who consulted you concerning

their right to elect into the senate foreign citizens, though of the same province. The authority of the law on one side, and long custom prevailing against it on the other, might justly occasion you to hesitate. The proper mean to observe in this case will be to make no change in what is past, but to allow those senators who are already elected, though contrary to law, to keep their seats, to whatever city they may belong; in all future elections, however, to pursue the directions of the Pompeian law: for to give it a retrospective operation would necessarily introduce great confusion.

LETTER CXVII. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

It is customary here upon any person taking the manly* robe, solemnising his marriage, entering upon the office of a magistrate, or dedicating any public work, to invite the whole senate, together with a considerable part of the commonalty, and distribute to each of the company one or two denarii.† I request you to inform me whether you think proper this ceremony should be observed, or how far you approve of it. For myself, though I am of opinion that upon some occasions, especially those of public festivals, this kind of invitation may be permitted, yet, when carried so far as to draw together a thousand persons, and sometimes more, it seems to be going beyond a reasonable number, and has somewhat the appearance of ambitious largesses.

LETTER CXVIII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You very justly apprehend that those public invitations which extend to an immoderate number of people, and where the dole is distributed, not singly to a few acquaintances, but, as it were, to whole collective bodies, may be

* See note †, page 13.

† The denarius = 8½*d*. The sum total, then, distributed among one thousand persons at the rate of, say, two denarii a piece would amount about £70.

turned to the factious purposes of ambition. But I appointed you to your present government, fully relying upon your prudence, and in the persuasion that you would take proper measures for regulating the manners and settling the peace of the province.

LETTER CXIX. *To* THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The athletic victors, Sir, in the Iselastic * games, conceive that the stipend you have established for the conquerors becomes due from the day they are crowned: for it is not at all material, they say, what time they were triumphantly conducted into their country, but *when* they merited that honour. On the contrary, when I consider the meaning of the term *Iselastic*, I am strongly inclined to think that it is intended the stipend should commence from the time of their public entry. They likewise petition to be allowed the treat you give at those combats which you have converted into Iselastic, though they were conquerors before the appointment of that institution: for it is but reasonable, they assert, that they should receive the reward in this instance, as they are deprived of it at those games which have been divested of the honour of being Iselastic, since their victory. But I am very doubtful, whether a retrospect should be admitted in the case in question, and a reward given, to which the claimants had no right at the time they obtained the victory. I beg, therefore, you would be pleased to direct my judgment in these points, by explaining the intention of your own benefactions.

* These games are called *Iselastic* from the Greek word εἰσελαύνω, *invehor*, because the victors, drawn by white horses, and wearing crowns on their heads, were conducted with great pomp into their respective cities, which they entered through a breach in the walls made for that purpose; intimating, as Plutarch observes, that a city which produced such able and victorious citizens, had little occasion for the defence of walls (Catanaeus). They received also annually a certain honourable stipend from the public. *M.*

LETTER CXX. Trajan *to* Pliny.

The stipend appointed for the conqueror in the Iselastic games ought not, I think, to commence till he makes his triumphant entry into his city. Nor are the prizes, at those combats which I thought proper to make Iselastic, to be extended backwards to those who were victors before that alteration took place. With regard to the plea which these athletic combatants urge, that they ought to receive the Iselastic prize at those combats which have been made Iselastic subsequent to their conquests, as they are denied it in the same case where the games have ceased to be so, it proves nothing in their favour; for notwithstanding any new arrangement which has been made relating to these games, they are not called upon to return the recompense which they received prior to such alteration.

LETTER CXXI. *To* the Emperor Trajan.

I have hitherto never, Sir, granted an order for post-chaises * to any person, or upon any occasion, but in affairs that relate to your administration. I find myself, however, at present under a sort of necessity of breaking through this fixed rule. My wife having received an account of her grandfather's † death, and being desirous to wait upon her aunt ‡ with all possible expedition, I thought it would be unkind to deny her the use of this privilege; as the grace of so tender an office consists in the early discharge of it, and as I well knew a journey which was founded in filial piety could not fail of your approbation. I should think myself highly ungrateful therefore, were I not to acknowledge that, among other great obligations which I owe to your indulgence, I have this in particular, that, in confidence of your favour, I have ventured to do, without consulting you, what would have been too late had I waited for your consent.

* See letter xxiv. of this book, and the note there. *M.*
† Fabatus. ‡ Hispulla.

LETTER CXXII. TRAJAN *to* PLINY.

You did me justice, my dearest secundus, in confiding in my affection towards you. Without doubt, if you had waited for my consent to forward your wife in her journey by means of those warrants which I have entrusted to your care, the use of them would not have answered your purpose; since it was proper this visit to her aunt should have the additional recommendation of being paid with all possible expedition.

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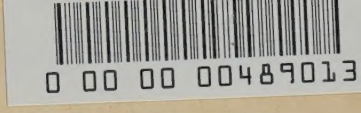
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